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DATA ENTERED

A CRITICAL APPRECIATION  
OF  
ARABIC MYSTICAL POETRY

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By :-  
*Sadiq Hussain*

S.H. Nadeem M.A. (Arabic); M.A. (English)

Associate Professor and Head of  
the department of Arabic language  
and Literature, Government College,  
Lahore.

Under the supervision of  
Professor Dr. Rana M.N. Ehsan Elahi,  
M.A., Ph.D.(Pb.), Ph.D.(Cantab),  
University of the Punjab, Lahore.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mysticism is a quest for reality.<sup>1</sup> A mystic is one who seeks by contemplation and self surrender to obtain union with or absorption into the Deity, or who believes in the spiritual apprehension of truths beyond the understanding.<sup>2</sup> Inasmuch as the fundamental aim of the mystic is to penetrate behind the veil of appearance to some ultimate and abiding reality, there is manifestly a close community of purpose between him and the metaphysician. But their diversity of method<sup>3</sup> is no less marked than their partial community of purpose. The philosopher seeks, in the end, the same goal as the mystic; his peculiarity is that he is so constituted as to reach his goal only by the route of intellectual speculation.<sup>4</sup> Whereas mysticism, as Goethe tells us, is the scholastic of the heart, the dialectic of the feelings.<sup>5</sup> "He is no God who merely satisfies the intellect, says Mahatma Gandhi, if He ever does. God to be God must rule the heart and transform it. He must express Himself in every smallest

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1. Cf. Mahmud Kerkh<sup>h</sup>'s (d. 200 A.H./815 A.D.) definition of Tasawwuf quoted by Qasheiri in his Risala, Mustafa al-Babi, Egypt, 1940, P.139.

2. Concise Oxford Dictionary.

3. A.E. Taylor, Elements of Metaphysics (University Paper, back), Methuen, London, 1961, P.13.

4. Ibid P.15.

5. W.R. Inge, Christian Mysticism, Methuen, London, 1899, P.338.

out of His votery" as God intoxicated Tagore sings:

He it is the innermost one, who awakens my being  
with his deep touches.

He it is who puts his enchantment upon these eyes  
and joyfully plays on the chords of my heart in  
varied cadence of pleasure and pain.

The mystic thinks that the spiritual knowledge is beyond  
the intellectual methods of proof for in the words of  
St. Thomas Aquinas it is *cognitio dei experimentalis*, the  
knowledge of God through experience.<sup>3</sup> It is on the  
strength of this empirical knowledge that mystic tells  
the metaphysician that

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
than are dreamt of in your philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

Saint Ignatius confessed one day to Father Laynez that a  
single hour of meditation at Manresa had taught him more  
truths about heavenly things than all the teachings of all  
the doctors put together could have taught him.<sup>5</sup>

A mystic has no truth in intellectual speculation,

1. Young India, October 11, 1928.

2. Tagore, Rabindranath, Gitanjali, London, 1932, P.67,  
Poem No.72.

3. I owe this quotation from Thomas' Summa Theologiae to  
Gershom S. Scholem's book Major Trends in Jewish Literature,  
London, 1955, P.4.

4. Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act I Sc.5. 156-58.

5. William James: The Varieties of Religious Experience  
(The Fontana Library) London, 1950, P.396.



for he thinks like Tennyson's *Ancient Sage* -----

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,  
 Nor canst thou prove the world thou move in;  
 Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone,  
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,  
 Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one,  
 Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no,  
 Nor yet that thou art mortal... nay, my son,  
 Thou canst not prove that I who speak with thee,  
 Am not thyself in converse with thyself,  
 For nothing worthy proving can be proven,  
 Nor yet disproven.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the philosopher a mystic makes no distinction between the subject and the object. Plotinus affirmed that for perfect knowledge the subject and object must be united.<sup>2</sup>

For that which sees is itself the thing which is seen.<sup>3</sup> The expression *Tat tvam Asi*, Thou art That ... means: thy soul is Brahman; or in other words, the subject and the object of all being and all knowing are one and the same.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Poems of Tennyson edited by Christopher Ricks, Longman, 1969, P.1351.
  2. P.D.Cuspensky, Tertium Organum (translated from the Russian), New York, 1951, P.214.
  3. Plotinus, Select Works of Plotinus, Bohm's Library, P.271.
  4. Max Muller, Theosophy or Psychological Religion, London, Longmans, 1893, PP.105-6.

In spite of this difference some of the greatest metaphysicians, such as Plotinus and Spinoza and to a certain extent Hegel, have been personally mystics. Hegel<sup>1</sup> says, "The aim of Philosophy is to know the truth, to know God, for He is the absolute truth, inasmuch as nothing else is worth troubling about save God and the unfolding of God's nature." The Sufis or the Muslim mystics<sup>2</sup> sought, among other things, to cloth Philosophy in the language of religion.<sup>3</sup> Bertrand Russell observes: "The greatest men who have been philosophers have felt the need both of science and mysticism." But he thinks mysticism alone can reveal no truths. Truths are revealed, according to him, by scientific methods only.<sup>4</sup> For him mysticism is nothing more than emotions. "Mysticism", he writes, "is in essence little more than a certain intensity and depth of feeling in regard to what is believed about the universe."<sup>5</sup> But all the mystics including a philosopher like Plotinus say that what they experience is not simply emotions but perceptions.<sup>6</sup> William James seems to support their claim<sup>7</sup>

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1. Elements of Metaphysics, Op.cit. P.14.

2. G.W.F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Vol.III, P.148.

3. E.J.W.Gibb, A History of Ottoman Poetry, London, 1958, Vol.I. P.33.

4. Bertrand Russell, Mysticism & Logic, Unwin, London, 1918, P.9.

5. *Ibid.* PP 16-20.

6. *Ibid* P.10.

7. W.B.Stace, Mysticism & Philosophy, New York, 1960, P.15.

when he writes, "As a matter of psychological fact, mystical states of well-pronounced and emphatic sort are usually authoritative over those who have them. They have been "there" and know. It is vain for rationalists to grumble about this. If the mystical truth that comes to a man proves to be force that he can live by, what mandate have we of majority to order him to live another way"? Our own more rational beliefs are based on evidence exactly similar in nature to that which mystics quote for theirs. Our senses, namely, have assured us of certain states of facts; but mystical experiences are as direct perceptions of fact for those who have them as any sensations ever were for us. The records show that even though the five senses be in abeyance in them, they are absolutely sensational in their epistemological quality. The existence of mystical states absolutely overthrows the pretensions of non mystical states to be the sole<sup>1</sup> and ultimate dictators of what we believe.

Opinions are strangely at odds as to the social value of mysticism. Professor Josiah Royce's following estimation seems to be quite reasonable: "Mysticism has been the ferment of the faiths, the forerunner of spiritual liberty, the inaccessible refuge of the nobler

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1. William James Op. Cit. Pages 408-411.

herectics, the inspirer, through poetry, of countless youth who knew no metaphysics, the comforter of those who are weary of finitude<sup>1</sup>.

Nature of mystical experience has been studied by various writers. They supply us with common characteristics of all mystical states of consciousness. The lists of these commonly shared qualities given by different scholars are at some variance with one another but they do not contradict one another. William James gives us the following four qualities:

1. Ineffability. The subject of the state says that it defies expression, that no adequate report of its content can be given in words. Its quality must be directly experienced. It cannot be imparted or transferred to others.

2. Noetic quality. Although so similar to states of feeling, mystical states seem to those who experience them to be also states of knowledge. They are states of insight into depths of truth. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance.

3. Transiency. Mystical states cannot be sustained for long.

4. Passivity. Although the encoming of mystical state

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1. J. Royce, The World and the Individual, London, Macmillan, 1901, P. 85.



may be facilitated by preliminary voluntary operations, as by fixing the attention or by performances which manuals of mysticism prescribe, yet when the characteristic sort of consciousness once has set in, the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and he were held by some superior<sup>1</sup> power.

Miss Evelyn Underhill rejects William James's four marks of the mystic state and gives the following four characteristics of mysticism.

1. True mysticism is active and practical, and not passive and theoretical. It is an organic life-process, a something which the whole self does.
2. Its aims are wholly transcendental and spiritual.
3. The one is for the mystic, not merely the Reality of all that is but also a living and personal object of Love.
4. Living Union with this One which is the term of his adventure, is a definite state or form of enhanced life. It is obtained neither from an intellectual realization of its delights, nor from the most acute emotional longings. Though these must be present, they are not enough. It is arrived at by a definite and arduous

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1. Ibid: Page 367-368.

Psychological process - the so called Mystic Way, entailing the complete remaking of character and the liberation of a new, or rather latent, form of consciousness, which imposes on the self the condition which is sometimes inaccurately called 'ecstasy', but is better named the Unitive State<sup>1</sup>.

It is evident that she does not contradict William James. She only supplements him as Mr. Pratt observes, "Professor James's point of view is naturally very different from that of Miss Underhill; yet his conclusions are in many ways similar to hers".<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Guspenky only slightly differs with William James and gives a revealing criticism of the latter. "Prof. James", he writes, enumerates the following ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, passivity. But some of these characteristics belong also to simple emotional states, and he fails to define exactly how mystical states can be distinguished from emotional ones of analogous character. Considering mystical states as "Knowledge by expanded consciousness", it is possible to give quite definite criteria for their discernment and their differentiation from generality of psychic experiences.

1. Underhill, Mysticism (1926) London, Pages 96-97.

2. J. B. Pratt: The Religious Consciousness (1926)

Macmillan & Company, P. 445.

1. Mystical states give knowledge which nothing else can give.
2. Mystical states give knowledge of the real world with all its signs and characteristics.
3. The mystical states of men of different ages and different peoples exhibit an astonishing similarity, sometimes amounting to complete identity.
4. The results of the mystical experience are entirely illogical from our ordinary point of view. They are super-logical, i.e., *Tertium Organum*, which is the key to mystical experience, is applicable to them in all its entirety<sup>1</sup>.

R.M. Bucke gives the following characteristics of the mystical experience:<sup>2</sup> (1) the subjective light or photism. (2) Moral elevation, (3) intellectual illumination, (4) Sense of immortality, (5) Loss of fear of death, (6) Loss of sense of sin, (7) Suddenness. D.T. Suzuki's list of the same is as follows:<sup>3</sup> (1) Irrationality, inexplicability, incommunicability; (2) intuitive insight, (3) authoritativeness, (4) affirmation; (5) Sense of beyond; (6) Impersonal tens; (7) Feeling of exaltation; Momentariness. The most significant attitude of the

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1. P.D. Ouspensky, Tertium Organum. Op. Cit. P.P. 251-252.

2. R.M. Bucke, Cosmic Consciousness, New York, L.P. Dutton & Co. PP. 72-73 and 79.

3. D.T. Suzuki, Zen Buddhism: selected writings of D.T. Suzuki ed. William Barrett, New York PP 103-108.

mystic is that he sees unity in plurality and believes that universe is one indivisible whole, and that what seems to be its parts, if considered as substantial and self existing, are mere illusions. Much of the mystical thought springs from this feeling which seems to be universal. To what ever age or country a mystic may belong he experiences oneness in all things. Thus the very first sentence of the exordium of Heraclitus(500 B.C) book is as follows:

"Having hearkened not unto me, but to the Logos, it is wise to confess that all things are one"<sup>1</sup>. The Eleatics argued, "If there is an infinite, it is one, for if there were two, they could not be infinite, but could be finite one towards the other. But that which exists is infinite, and there cannot be more such(soures). Therefore that which exists is one."<sup>2</sup>

"All preceeding is the great Tao. It may be found on the left hand and on the right. It clothes all things as with a garment, and makes no assumption of being their lord. It may be named in the smallest things, " says the Chinese sage<sup>3</sup>.

The self\_says the Vedantic philosopher, cannot be different

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1. James Adams, Religious Teachers of Greece, Edinburgh, 1908, P.216.

2. Melissos, Fragm.3.

3. Lao Tzu. Tao Te Ching, XXXIV, 1, 2. quoted by Annie Besant in the Ancient Wisdom, London, 1897, P.11, see also Tao Te Ching translated by Chu Te\_Kao, London, 1959, P.48.



from Brahman, because Brahman comprehends all reality,  
and nothing that really is can therefore be different from  
Brahman<sup>1</sup>.

Lord Krishna says ----

There is true knowledge:

Learn that it is this:

To see one changeless Life in all the Lives,  
And in the Separate, one Inseparable<sup>2</sup>.

St. Paul says, "In Him we live and move and have our being"<sup>3</sup>  
An Arabic verse expresses the same truth:

Thy Beauty is One, indivisible,  
Its multiplicity is only conceptual,<sup>4</sup>  
All objects symbolise one Beauty<sup>5</sup>.

Goethe has a similar experience:

So, waiting, I have won from you the end:<sup>5</sup>  
God's presence in each element.

Blake crystallises this feeling in the lines:

To see a world in a grain of sand  
And a Heaven in a wild flower.  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Max Muller, Op.Cit. P.106.

2. The Bhagavad Gita, Book 18.

3. Quoted by Cusack, Op.cit. P.247; Max Muller, Op.cit. P.94.

4. Quoted by Iraqi (c.688 A.D./1289 A.D.) in his Loghat, see Kulliyat i-Iraqi edited by Sa'eed Naf'esi, Tehran, P. 382.

5. Martin Buber: I and Thou (Tr. R.G.Smith) P.Xiii.

6. Auguries of Innocence, London Book of English Verse P. 549.

Wordsworth tells this truth in his sublime manner.

..... Something for more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.<sup>1</sup>

Coleridge reveals that our charitable acts are motivated by this feeling of oneness.

'Tis the sublime of man,  
Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves  
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole;  
This fraternises men, this constitutes  
Our charities and bearings. But 'tis God<sup>2</sup>  
Diffused through all, that doth make all one.

This natural and spontaneous experience or feeling of oneness has been developed into a theory of immanence of God by mystical philosophy which holds that the quest of Absolute is no upward journey, but a realization of something which is implicit in the self, and in the universe:

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1. London Book of English Verse (1953) P. 561.

2. Coleridge: Religious Musings 127-131.

an opening of the eyes of the soul upon the Reality in which it is bethed. "God", says Plotinus, "is not external to any one, but is present in all things, though they are ignorant that He is so. God is not in a certain place, but wherever anything is able to come into contact with Him there He is present."<sup>1</sup> He further informs us, "A soul that knows itself must know that the proper direction of its energy is not outwards in a straight line, but round a centre which is within it".<sup>2</sup> "He is not far from any one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being", is the pure doctrine of imminence: a doctrine whose teachers are drawn from amongst the soul which react more easily to the touch of the Divine than to the sense of alienation and of skin, and are naturally inclined to love rather than to hate.<sup>3</sup> According to William James the upholders of this theory belong to the healthy minded class.<sup>4</sup> Martin Buber says, "God is immanent within the world and is brought to perfection through the world and through the life of man."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ennead vi.9, 4,7. Compare this with Quranic verse  
Wherever thou turn, there is  
the face of God.

2. Enn.vi, 9,8.

3. Miss Underhill, Mysticism, P.119.

4. William James, Op. cit. Lecture V. Dr. Isabel Post  
Philosopher of East has criticized this view in his  
famous verse You make your God to sit on throne in heaven  
O preacher. What sort of God it is who avoids His  
servants.

5. Martin Buber, Über Jakob Böhme, P.251.

He would truly goes out to meet the world goes out also  
 to God<sup>1</sup>. God is the unity of finite and infinite<sup>2</sup>, the  
 subsistence of all things<sup>3</sup>. Without the world God is not  
 God<sup>4</sup>.

Martin Buber aptly remarks, "He who refuses to limit  
 God to the transcendent has a fuller conception of Him  
 than he who does so limit Him. But he who confines God<sup>5</sup>  
 within the immanent means some thing other than Him.  
 These two apparently contradictory explanations of the  
 Invisible have both been held by the mystics and this  
 paradoxical view of the ultimate reality seems to be  
 quite old as Martin Buber seems to be quite old as Martin  
 Buber points out that transcendence and immanence are  
 united in the following line of Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.)<sup>6</sup>:

Zeus is all and what is more than all.

Sufism i.e. Islamic mysticism combines God's transcendence  
 with His immanence. Boyce Gibbs only repeats the Sufis  
 when he writes, "God is at once transcendent and  
 immanent in relation to the soul which shares His Life."<sup>7</sup>

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1. Martin Buber, I and Thou, Op.cit., P.95.

2. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Vol.II  
 P.126.

3. Ibid.P.55.

4. Ibid Vol.I.P.200.

5. Martin Buber, Eclipse of God, New York, 1957, P.28.

6. Ibid PP.28-29. The line is from Agamemnon.

7. Boyce Gibbs, God Within us, P.24. Guru Granth says,  
 "I am the life of the Bhaktas and the Bhaktas are my  
 life"(Puram Singh, the spirit of Oriental Poetry,  
 London, 1926.p.132,



since we are embarking upon a study of Sufi poetry a brief account of Sufism seems desirable.

### S U F I S M.

The word Sufi is the equivalent of the word mystic in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and in many other eastern languages which the Muslims speak. Different derivations of this word have been suggested by both ancient and modern writers. Some have derived it from Sufe (purity), others from Suf (the Bench) of the prophets time or from Suf (wool). Some orientalist have identified it with the Greek word σοφία (wise). Holdeke has shown conclusively that the word Sufi was derived from Suf (wool). It was applied to those Muslim mystics who clad themselves in woollen clothes as a mark of renunciation of worldly pleasures. The Sufis call themselves, Ahl al-Haq, 'the followers of the Real'. They have given a number of definition of mysticism (Tasawwuf) which throw greater light on the topic than many volumes written by non mystics. Some describe an attitude to life, others a state of soul, yet others a relationship to God. "Sufism" is apprehension of divine realities and disregard of worldly possessions", says Masroof Kerkhi. "Tasawwuf consists in giving up all bodily pleasures." (Abul Hussain Nuri). "It means good morals." (Murtashih). "It is a reality and stands on no ceremonies." (Ibnul Jali). It is idolatry, because it endeavours to distract the heart

reference

from other (than God), while no such other exists" (shibli).  
 "It consists in fixing the heart on God without any intermediary". (Junaid). Sufi possesses nothing and is possessed by nothing. Sufism means an empty head and a good heart<sup>1</sup>. So in the light of these definitions by Islamic mysticism seems to be an unworldly attitude towards life entailing a strict ascetic discipline leading to the nearness of God. Asceticism, far from being an end in itself, is merely a means. God is the goal of the Sufi. The climax of all mystical struggle is contained in Junaid's definition which runs like this: Sufism means that God should cause you to die to yourself and live in Him. Ibnul Arabi throws light on the nature of this union by holding that it is an experience in which the self evident proposition that "Reality is essentially one" is verified. Thus giving it a philosophic turn he denies union with God in the sense of becoming one with God. There is no becoming what, so, ever according to the theory, but there is realisation of the already existing fact that you are one with God. Thus Ibnul Arabi reveals to us that the doctrine of unity of being (Wahdat al -Wajud) is the core of Sufism. Though the earliest Sufis with pronounced pantheistic leanings belong to the beginning of the third century of Hجرة the mystics<sup>2</sup> believe that Wahdat ul Wajud is as old as Islam itself.

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1. All these definitions are recorded in Goshairi, Risala, 8p P-139 and onward.

2. This view is supported by certain Quranic verses for example (1) We are nearer to him (man) than his Jugular v (L-16), 2,

This was the secret which earlier Sufis guarded with great care, and it was the very truth revealed to them in their mystical experience.<sup>1</sup> Ibnul Arabi who is commonly given the credit of being its originator was in fact a great theosophist who gave it a philosophic basis and presented it in such an impressive manner that he was mistaken to be its creator. Many great sufis like, Attar, Jalal ud Din Rumi, Iraqi and Jami are pantheistic through and through. In one of his odes Rumi (d 672/1273) says:

"O my soul, I searched from end to end. I saw no thee  
naught save the Beloved;

Call me not infidel, O my soul, if I say that thou  
thyself art He."<sup>2</sup>

And yet more plainly:

"Ye who in search of God, of God, pursue,  
Yet need not search for God, is you, is you  
Why seek ye something that was missing never?  
Gave you none is, but you are... where, oh, where?"<sup>3</sup>

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1. "The gnostics, after their ascent to the heaven of reality", writes Ghazali, "agree that they saw nothing in existence except God, the one. Some of them attained this state through discursive reasoning (Irfaan ilmiyy) others reached it by savouring it (Ubhoen) and experiencing (Halen) it. From these all plurality fell away." *Nishket ul Anwar* contained in *al-Jawahir al Ghaybi min Rasail Ghazali* edited by Mohyuddin Gabri Cairo 1343 A.H. P. 114.

2. Nicholson: *Mystics of Islam*.

3. *Ibid*.

(xviii)

Iraqi says: God is the beloved, the love and the lover.  
You yourself do not exist why talk of separation.

Mir Khusro says: All that appears is none other than thee,  
either it is thou, or by smell or thy attribute &

Famous Turkish poet Yunus (13th century A.D.)  
writes;

I am eternity in sooth, that King, the un-  
conditioned Truth:

The Outer and the Inner I, He whom they always see I  
He who did earth and sky create, who maketh throne & stool  
Thousand and one His Names; Yunus, He of the Quran, <sup>rotate</sup> Yes, am I.

Examples might be multiplied, but those that have been  
given are enough to show that Sufism is almost synonymous  
with the unity of Being (Wahdat al Wajud). Although this  
doctrine was condemned by scholastics and champions of  
Orthodoxy like Ibn al Taymiya, no sufi ever opposed it upto  
the time of Indian Mystic, Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan (1563-  
1634-971-1034 A.H.) who was the first Sufi to raise his  
voice against it. As he himself admits, he was, formerly  
a believer in the doctrine but subsequently discarded it,  
perhaps due to political reasons, and expounded his own  
theory of Wahdat al Shuhud (Testimonial Unity). According  
to this new theory the experience of Wahdatul Wajud (Unity  
of Being) which the mystic acquires in the unitive state  
known as fana al fana is only subjective i.e. it is mere



shuhud or appearance and objective reality is different from what the mystic has experienced. So this new theory regards the universe as something separate from God and discredits all those mystics who think it one with Him, for according to Wahdet and Shuhud the phenomena can at best be the shadow of the Almighty. The Majdidi championed the cause of orthodoxy which for him was identical with the opinions of the scholastics (Mutakallimoon) whom he lends the support of his mystical experience. He writes, "There are three categories of mystics (Kashyikh) The first sect believes that the Universe has an external existence of its own as created by God. As regards its scholastic beliefs it is in harmony with Sunni scholars. There is no difference of opinion between this sect and the scholastics except that what the latter ~~think~~ believe on the basis of discursive reasoning the saints belonging to this sect believe the same on the strength of revelation (Kashf). According to the second sect the universe is a reflection (Zill) or shadow of God and has an external existence. It holds that the existence of the Universe depends on God. The third sect believes in Wahdatul Wajud, i.e. only God exists. The first sect is in the greatest harmony with the Quran and the Hadith. Formerly I believed in Wahdatul Wajid and mystical revelation (Kashf) also proved its verity. Then I followed other channels and came to the station of adumbration (Zilliyyat) and at last I reached the station of servitude (abdiyyat) and I repented of the former stations. Before that 1

thought that there was no station higher than unification".<sup>1</sup> Mujaddid was refuted by the greatest divines like Shah Wali Ullah (1114-1176 A.H./1702-1762 A.D.), Shah Rafi Uddin (d. 1249 A.H.) and Shah Ismail Shahid (1194-1247 A.H.) who upheld Ithnaul Arabis doctrine of Wahdet al Wajud.<sup>2</sup> Maulana Ghibli summarises the situation as it stood at the beginning of the twentieth century: He writes, "According to Sufis there is nothing in existence except God. All of them hold that God is not something separate from Universe. But there are two different interpretations of this basic fact. One group of Sufis thinks that when the Being manifests itself through determinations and individuations the phenomena is, caused, just as bubbles waves are caused by the movement of the river. This group is called "Wajudi". The other group is named Shahoodi. According to Sufies belonging to this group phenomena is a reflection or shadow of the Being and has no independent being. The difference between Wahdet al Wajud (Existential monism) and Wahdet Shahud (Testimonial monism) lies in the fact that according to the former everything can be called God but while according to the latter we cannot say that everything is God because the shadow of the man is not the man himself..... But it is a

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1. Maktubat (letters) Vol.I. Letters 160 and 31.

2. See for detail Dr. Surhan Ahmad Faruqi's The Mujaddid's Conception of Tauhid (Lahore) 1941 pp. 145-170 and ~~Shah Wali Ullah's Akbariyya Madani~~ (Urdu translation by Maulana Hanif Hedwi), pp. 23-24; Abstract by Shah Ismail Wabeed, Naqd-i-Iqbal (Lahore), by Maikesh Akbarabadi.

fact that we can't do without *Wahdet ul Wajud*. Let us first consider the premises of this problem. 1. God is Eternal. 2. Eternal cannot be the cause of phenomenal as cause and effect co-exist. If the cause is Eternal the effect will also be eternal. 3. The universe is phenomenal. Now the conclusion is that God cannot be the cause of the Universe. To meet this objection the scholastic theologians who believed in appearances only (*Arbab al-Zahir*) say that God's will or its relation is phenomenal and thus it is the cause (of the Universe). What is the cause of the relation of God's will?, may be questioned. Because when the will or its relation is phenomenal it will also itself need a cause which will lie necessarily phenomenal as the cause of the phenomenal is always phenomenal and this cause being phenomenal, will need another cause leading to an endless chain of causes which is unacceptable to the scholastics. If this chain of causes ends at a final cause then this final cause must be eternal because in the case of its being phenomenal the chain of causes will continue endlessly. And if this final cause is accepted to be eternal then it will necessarily be the cause of the phenomenal and it has been already proved that eternal cannot be the cause of the phenomenal. So there are only three possibilities.

1. The universe is eternal but still created by God. But when both God and Universe are eternal one cannot be the cause of other.

2. The Universe is eternal and has no creator. This view belongs to the atheists.
3. The Universe is eternal but inseparable from God. It is nothing but His manifestation.

Not this last proposition constitute the religion of the Sufis. It is free of all objections because the notion that Universe and God are two separate entities are being the cause of other, is the only source of complications. So we cannot avoid Wahdat al-Wajud from the point of view of philosophy. Now the question arises whether Sharia or the text of Quran goes against this notion or not. But this hypothesis is unfounded. There are many verses in Quran proving that God is the First the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden and everything<sup>1</sup>.

Closely connected with the doctrine of Wahdat al Wajud is the notion of equality of all men as Mr. Michael I Zand beautifully puts it.

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1. Akhbari Humani (1857-1914 A.D.): Sayyid Mawla Humani (Lahore 1909) pages 179-182. See for the life and works of the author Encyclopaedia of Islam Vol. IV. Page 361. See also Preaching of Islam by Arnold and Literary History of Persia by Browne. It may be pointed out that the last sentence is the literal translation of the third verse of Surah Hodeed. See Quran LVII, 3. It is interesting to note that in old Greek literature we find a pantheistic idea exactly similar to the one expressed in this Quranic verse. James Adam after noting the element of pantheism in the theosophical poems of Orphics (600 B.C.) adds, "One of the fragments celebrates Zeus as first and last, the head and middle, out of whom all things are created." James Adam, The Religious Teachers of Greece, Edinburgh, 1908, P. 95.



On the philosophical level, the teachings of the early sufis amounted to a pantheistic identification of God and the Universe and hence on the social level they propagated equality of all people, since potentially each carried in himself an equal measure of the divine. In addition, they condemned wealth, rapacity, oppression, and called for the performance of good deeds<sup>1</sup>. In fact Sufism by its very nature catered to the needs of people from its very conception. Its strength lay in the satisfaction which it gave to the religious instincts of the people, instincts which were chilled and starved by the abstract and impersonal teachings of the theologians and found relief in the more directly personal and emotional religious approach of the Sufis. It is essential to bear in mind this popular character and appeal of Sufism, which arose out of the ranks of the people and appealed to the people, who were inspired by accounts of the lives of the saints often filled out with miraculous deeds while theology left them unmoved. The formulation of an orthodox theology was the work and excited the interest of only a comparatively small body of scholars; to the masses this dogmatic superstructure was, and still is a matter of indifference because its abstract discussions are a poor substitute for the vivid personal relation between God and

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1. Michael I. Zand: Six centuries of Glory (Moscow, 1967)

men presented by the Quran. The theologians, however, were proud of their system and jealous to maintain its authority as it guaranteed their religious leadership. By their science alone, they held, could the Truth or reality be apprehended and preserved, and any relaxation would lead to heresy and corruption.<sup>1</sup> But the religious system to which they held so tenaciously could not be disentangled from the political system of the time, as the former was a reflection and the natural consequent of the latter. The theologians occupied official ranks and were an integral part of the ruling Junta. Only the selected few could claim to the Supreme religious knowledge just as a handful of people had the divine right of ruling the masses strictly according to their whims under the religious covers of Fatwa supplied by Ulama.<sup>2</sup> Sufi had no patience for going through this elaborate but dead system. He bluntly and derisively rejected the claim of theologians as the sole authoritative exponents of Islamic doctrines. Abu Yazid Bisrmi used to say to the Ulama of his time, "You acquired your dead sciences from dead persons and we got our science from the Living one who never dies".<sup>3</sup> Rumi

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1. H.A.R. Gibb Mohammedanism, Paper back 1969 PP. 90-97.

2. These ulama are called Ulama Qoo i.e. evil minded scholars by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his book Tadkire which gives their graphic description.

3. Sherrani: Yama'it wal Jawahir (1306 A.H.) printed in Egypt. P.16. Compare it with following lines of Meister Eckhart (born 1260 A.D.) entitled "Relics":  
 My people, why seek ye after dead bones?  
 Why seek ye not after living holiness, which might give you everlasting life? The dead can neither give nor take away.  
 (W.R. Inge: Light, Life & Love (London 1935) P.16.

himself an eminent scholar was fed up with the second-hand stuff of the School (Qil o Qal i Madrasa) and sought salvation through sufism. Just as Ghazali had done before him. For opposite Sufi there was only one way to knowledge direct and personal experience (Ma'rifa) leading to divine reality. These two extremely different approaches to the religious problem or the problem of knowledge created a rift between the doctrinaire legist and the follower of Inner Light. Sufis never lost the separate entity of their path nor their contact with the people was severed. In sharp contrast to hypocritical Ulema they were indulgent towards the elements of popular religion like singing, dancing and rending of garments to produce ecstatic state. These were abhorring to the puritans amongst the orthodoxy. Al Ghazali is generally credited with having secured a firm and assured position for Sufism in Islam. But this rapprochement could not bridge gulf which existed between the two due to their opposite natures. The official Islamic church was founded on Asherite scholastic theology (Kalam) and the undemocratic and anti people politics, and both of these went against the very grain of Sufism. To say that Al Ghazali was

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1. Junaid is reported to have heard sinners (Zawwal) and Yahya Ibn Maada refers to his dancing in his verses. See their biographies in Hilyat al Awliya (By Abu Nuaim Isbahani) Vol. 10.

handicapped by his fondness for Asharite scholastic although he accepted it critically is not to belittle his role as a great master of the science of hearts. The fact remains that official church (Sharia) and Tasawwuf have not sunk their differences upto this day inspite of his Herculean efforts. While scholasticism of the church has continued to side with the reactionary and anti people forces Tasawwuf always encouraged the progressive tendencies. It has championed the cause of down trodden & the victims of tyranny and has revolted against all sorts of repression. Even in the decadent periods of Islamic society it proved to be the most effective weapon against the feudal oppression. Michael I <sup>2</sup>and commenting on the after effects of havoc created by Chingis Khan, writes, "Revolt against the invaders, flaring up sporadically, throughout the vast expanses of Mawerannahr, Khurasan, and Iran were squashed with incredible cruelty. The large land owners and the clergy, not to speak of the rich merchants, who frequently acted Mongol agents, soon enough took the invaders side. The screw of oppression which seemed tightened to capacity turned now beyond endurance. In these circumstances, a mystical movement known by the name of Sufism became one of the most developed forms of anti feudal opposition. Sufism sprang up at the turn of the VIII century on the territory of present day Iraq and Syria, and was from its very conception linked with the activities of feudal towns. To western Iran, Khurasan and Mawerannahr it came



comparatively late ..... The social aspect of sufism attracted the poor, especially those of towns, from whose midst many of the early sufis had sprung. It also evoked certain sympathies among the feudal intellectuals who were growing increasingly aware of their humiliating, subordinated role at feudal courts. The philosophical aspect of "ufism, in its turn, aroused the partisanship of many men of culture, since in some measure it freed human reason from the stifling clasp of dogmatism<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Michael I. Zand: Six centuries of Glory Shauke  
Publishing House, Oriental Literature department,  
Moscow 1967, Pages 114-116.

Mystical poetry had little appeal for the compilers of the early Arabic verse who undertook their labour in the hope of monetary rewards from the princes. It was ignored by the <sup>philologists</sup> ~~philologists~~ and the historians of literature who seem to be no less mercenary. Authors of belles-lettres are equally insensitive to its simple charms and seldom record a verse with a genuine mystical note although they pay some attention to the poetry of piety (Zuhdiyyat). Biographical dictionaries are of some help to the student of sufi poetry but he has to depend mainly on the histories of Sufism like Bilyat al-Auliya of Abu Nu'aim al-Isbahani (d 430/1038) and Sufi manuals like Kitab al-Luma' of Abu Nasr al-Sarraj (d.378/988) and Kitab al-Tasarruf of Abu Bakr al-Katibabhi (390/1000). There are no other sources for the study of the Arabic mystic poetry of the first ~~four~~ centuries after Hegira

If we believe Adem Mez who tells us "Khuldi (d 348/959) at the age of ninety five prided himself on carrying three hundred Sufi Divans in his head", <sup>1</sup> we can imagine the magnitude of the lost mystic verse as we possess only one such divan (that of his senior contemporary, the well known Sufi Martr al-Hallaj) as can possibly be counted among these three hundred poetical works. The only two other extant Divans belonging to the period to be studied here are those of Ibnul Arabi (d.638 A.H. = 1240 A.D.) and Ibn al-Farid (589-632/1181-1235). We do not possess even an anthology of Arabic Mystical poetry like the Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse.

Adem Mez: The Renaissance of Islam (Luzac & Co.) 1937, page 285

PRE ISLAMIC POETRY

The earliest Arabic poetry (known as Pre Islamic or Jahiliyya Poetry) is predominantly secular. Even minor allusions to Allah or the Deity are extremely rare. Only a few poems and poetical fragments declaring the unity of God or praising Him and expressing feelings of wonder at His creation written by Hanif and Christian poets have been preserved. Werge Ibn Naufal exhorting his audience to worship their only Creator writes:

لقد نصحت لأقوام وقلت لهم أنا النذير فلا يخرركم احد  
لا تعبدون إلها غير خالقكم فان دعواكم فقولوا بيننا حدود

I have advised the people and told them, "I am the warners  
Let no one deceive you the depression of seventy valleys"

To not worship any one save your Creator. If you are  
called upon to worship other than God say, "There is  
barrier between us."

The following verses from another ode of his express  
religious sentiments in a quasi mystical tone

وقد تدرك الانسان رحمه ربه ولو كان تحت الارض سبعين واديا  
ادين لرب يستجيب ولا ارى ادين لمن لا يسمح الدهر داحيا

And sometimes God's grace reaches the man even if he is as  
low under the earth as the depression of seventy valleys.

1. Shaikh: *Shahid al-Haramiyya* Vol. 4 Page 616, *Shahid al-Haramiyya*  
Isfani: *Aghani* Vol. III Page 121.  
2. Shaikh: *Op.cit.* Vol. IV, Page 618.

I believe in a God who grants my prayer and do not put my faith in a deity who can never hear the call.

Umayyeh ibn Abi Salih (+ 624 A.D.) is foremost among these pre-Islamic religious poets and has composed the maximum number of odes in praise of God in the following style.

إله العالمين وكل أرض ورب الراسيات من الجبال  
بناها وأبنتي سبعاً شداً رأياً بلاءمديرين ولا رجال  
وسواها ونزيتيها بنور من الشمس المضيئة والحلال

God of worlds and of every place and the Lord of firm mountains. He built them (mountains), and constructed seven strongholds (skies) without any visible pillars or men.

He levelled and decorated them with the shining sun and the crescent moon.

The imagery, diction and the ideas of the poem closely resemble those of the Qur'an.

In the rest of the poem he meditates over the transitoriness of the world and concludes it by remarking that the

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1. Dīwan (Beirut 1934) page 49; Shu'ara al-Haramiyya Op. cit. Vol. II. P. 226.



sinners will be treated like culprits and thrown into the hell while the virtuous will enjoy the pleasures of paradise.

Of far greater interest is his ode describing the splendour of God seated on a throne surrounded by obedient and terrified angels.

مليث على عرش السماء مجيبن  
لحرته تعزوا الوجوه وتشجرون  
عليه حجاب النور والنور حوله  
و انوار نور حوله تتوقد  
فلا يصير ليعلم اليه بطرفه  
و دون حجاب النور خلق مريد  
مدتك اقداسهم تحت عرشه  
بلقيه لولا الله كلوا دابلوا  
قيام على الاقدام عاين تحت  
فرايضهم من شدة الخوف ترعد

correct  
with  
فرايضهم  
صادمهم

A king seated on the throne of sky. He is watchful. The faces submit before His glory and fall prostrate before Him. He is veiled and surrounded by lumination and rivulets of light are shining around Him. No eye is raised to glance at Him. The creatures are behind the curtain of light. The feet of angels are placed under his throne. If God were not there they would have been weary and perplexed. The angels are standing ready to perform their duties, trembling due to extreme fear.

Merkabah

This resembles the throne-world (of Merkabah mysticism) which is not absorbed contemplation of God's true nature, but perception of His appearance on the throne world is

The throne world is to the Jewish mystic what the pleroma, the "fullness", the bright sphere of divinity with its potencies, aeons, archons and dominions is to the Hellenistic and early Christian mystics of the period who appear in the history of religion under the names of Gnostics and Hermetics. <sup>1</sup> Unayyah ibn Salih's poem reminds us of the tracts of <sup>Markebah</sup> ~~Hekrebah~~ visionaries inspired by this Judized form of cosmocratorial mysticism without any touch of shekhinah, God's indwelling in the world. Not only is here no divine immanence, there is also almost no love for the transcendent God who is here, "as in the Hekhaloth, above all a Holy King. The poem seems to be a prototype of the following passage from a hymn to "Zoharariel, Adonai, God of Israel", in the Greater Hekhaloth:

His throne radiates before Him and His palace is full of splendour.  
His majesty is becoming and His Glory is an adornment for Him.  
His servants sing before Him and proclaim the might of His wonders,  
As King of all kings and master of all masters, encircled by rows  
of Crowns, surrounded by the ranks of the princes of splendour.  
With a gleam of His ray he encompasses the sky and His splendour  
radiates from the heights.

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1. G. G. Scholem, Major trends in Jewish Mysticism, op. cit.  
P. 44.

Abysses flame from His Mouth and firmaments sparkle from  
His body.<sup>1</sup>

The world reflected in the poem evokes comparisons with the pattern of Byzantine society. But there is no reason for assuming that the descriptions of the celestial throne and heavenly court simply reflect the mundane reality of the Byzantine or Sassanid court. At the same time there can be no reasonable doubt that the atmosphere of the poem is in harmony with contemporary political and social conditions.

Nabigha al-Jasdi glorified God in Umayyad 'Abi Salim's manner.

الحمد لله لا شريك له من لم يقلقنا فنفسه ظلمنا  
الموحي الليل في الخمار وفي الليل نرا يفرج الظلم

All praises are due to Allah who has no partner and any one who does not proclaim this wrongs only himself. He turns the day into night and night into day dispelling darkness.

It is only in the poetry of Qasid al-Qasid (c.600 A.D.) that these wonderful and magnificent objects of Universe strike a true mystic note of love for their creator.

هاج بلقب من هواه اذكار و نبال خلافتن ناس

1. Ibid P.59.

(7)

و ببال شوا رخ را سیات و بحار میاهن غزار  
و نجوم یجتها قمر اللیل و شمس فی کل یوم تدار  
والذی قد ذکرته دل علی الله نفوسنا لهما هدی و اعتبار

His love has excited my heart to recollect Him. And the nights followed by day, the firm and lofty mountains, the oceans full of waters, the stars incited by nightly moon, daily revolving sun, whatever I have mentioned -- all lead the rightly guided and believing souls to think of God.

In one of his odes written in pre-Islamic period 'Abul Qays Sirma expresses feelings of religious tolerance like later Sufi poets who hold that all religions although apparently comprised of different dogmas and rites are essentially one, and the various creeds are only the various ways in which God is adored.

وله هودت یهود و دانت کل عین اذا ذكرت محض  
وله شمس النصارى و قاموا کل عید لربهم و احتفال  
وله الراهب الحبیب تراه رهن یوس و کان ناعم بال

For Him the Jews sing (in their synagogues) and the Christians become deacons (to serve Him) and stand in worship before their Lord at every Mass and in all congregations.



The monk imprisons himself in a cell to seek His pleasure. You see him suffering miseries while there<sup>1</sup> was a time when he enjoyed a life full of pleasures.

The first Arabic verse bearing on a definite mystical attitude was written by Labeeb ibn Rabi'a. The prophet is reported to have praised this verse by saying that it was the truest saying of the Arabs.<sup>2</sup> Here is the celebrated verse.

الا كل شئ ما خلا الله باطل  
وكل نعيم لامحالة نائل

Behold, everything is unreal save God (who is the sole existent) and no doubt every pleasure is just a passing shadow.<sup>3</sup>

These lines foreshadow the doctrine of unity of Being by suggesting that every impression of duality in the divine reality is imaginary and everything except the very essence of primevalness is non-existent. The Sufis too, as Ibn Khaldun tells us, interpret it in

1. Cheikhoo: Op.cit. P.8.

2. Bukhari Sahih Vol.IV. P.228.

3. The One remains, the many change and pass.  
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
Life, like a dome of many coloured glass,  
stains the white radiance of Eternity.  
Shelly, Adonais line 460 to 463.

pantheistically<sup>1</sup>. Abu Talib Makki writes that Labid has  
 denied the existence of everything other than God.<sup>2</sup> Ghazali  
 also interprets it like Makki.<sup>3</sup>

Senkera (c.820 A.D.) following two verses which are  
 often quoted as the shortest summary of the ideas of  
 Vedanta seem to be an echo of Labid's verse.

Brahma is true, the world is false. The soul is Brahma  
 and is nothing else.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibn Khaldun: Muqaddimah: Chapter XVII.

2. Out ul Qulab Vol.III, P.20.

3. Ihya Vol.IV. P.252.

4. P.D.Guspensky, Cp.cit., P.249.

FROM THE COMPANIONS OF THE HOLY PROPHET TO ABUL WAHID  
IBN ZAYD.

The religious poetry attributed to the companions of the holy Prophet is hardly deep enough to be called mystical. Mr. Ali Fahmy who in his famous book *حسن الصلابة* *في شرح رشتا الصلابة* has collected from various standard sources verses of more than two hundred companions of the holy Prophet, remarks in the preface, "They (companions) write about the unity and praise of Allah and his apostle. They describe the miracles which they saw and the hardships they underwent when they had to cross the deserts to come to him on deputation in the advent of Islam. They express in their poetry how they felt on seeing the bright face of the Prophet. They mention their war crises. Some of the verses are full of admonition and wisdom. They also wrote love poetry for the colance of their souls. Their amorous poetry is free from any disapprovable element". Thus the compiler of the anthology could not find any mystical poetry written by the companions of the holy Prophet. This does not mean that they never wrote such poetry as what has come down to us is only a relic of what they actually wrote. Though much of it seems to have been lost, time has preserved for us four very significant verses by prophet's closest companion Hadrat Ali, the best of the four pious caliphs. These four couplets which are in reality a hymn to the dignity and high

destiny of man easily admit of a monist interpretation.

دَاوُدُ ذِي دَاوُدَ دَاوُدَ دَاوُدَ دَاوُدَ دَاوُدَ  
وَتَزْعَمُ أَنَّ جَرْمَ صَغِيرٍ وَذِي النُّظُورِ الْعَالَمِ الْأَكْبَرِ  
وَأَنَّ الْكَلِمَةَ الْمُبِينِ الَّذِي بَا حَرْنَه يَنْظُرُ الْمَضْمُونِ  
وَأَنَّ الوجودَ وَفَنَسِ الوجودِ وَذِي الوجودِ فَمَا يَحْصُرُ

Thy remedy lies in three, but thou art not conscious of it,

And thy melody is caused by thee but thou dost not see it,

Thou assumeth thyself to be a small body,

While thou encompasseth the whole Universe

Thou art the clear Book with letters disclosing mysterie<sup>t</sup>

Thou art the Being, the very Being Itself.

Thou containeth what cannot be encompassed.<sup>1</sup>

The verses are in fact, a commentary on the famous prophetic tradition which tells that one who knows himself comes to know his Lord.

Man through self realization comes to know God who is his very ground. While every phenomenon shows some attributes of reality. Man is the microcosm (encompassing the macrocosm) in which all attributes are united, and in him alone does the Absolute become conscious of itself in all its diverse aspects. Thus

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1. Divan of Ali, Beirut Edition P.38.



the end of all genuine religions and mysticism is to emphasize this unique position of man and to raise his potential divinity to actual divinity... to improve his spiritual and material conditions to such an extent that he may really be worthy of being called a Divine Image. This is what these verses compel us to infer and every humanist is bound to think on these lines neither he is a mystic like Hadrat Ali or a materialist like Karl Marx whose love for humanity compels him to write.

The criticism of religion ends with the teaching that man is the highest essence for man, hence with the categorical imperative to overthrow all relations in which man is a debased, enslaved, abandoned, despicable essence, relations which cannot be better described than by the cry of a Frenchman when it was planned to introduce a tax on dogs: Poor dogs. They want to treat you as human beings.<sup>1</sup>

Again in his Theses on Feuer-bach he writes:  
Thus, for instance, once the earthly family is

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1. Karl Marx: Contribution to the critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right; Introduction included in K.Marx and Fe.Engels on Religion (Fourth edition 1966) published by Progressive Publishers, Moscow, Page 46.

discovered to be the secret of the holy family, the former must then itself be criticised in theory and revolutionized in practice.<sup>1</sup>

There can be no better commentary of the verses than this sentence.

Nobody is so earnest in revolutionizing mankind (or earthly family) as Sufi. His aim is to regenerate the human personality materially as well as spiritually. Though the ultimate and the highest aim of Sufism is to serve humanity by changing its mercenary attitude towards life, the Sufi begins with himself. Louis Messiaen<sup>2</sup> non

justly points out that the mystic cell is as a rule the result of an inner rebellion of the conscience against social injustices, not only those of others but primarily and particularly against one's own fault.<sup>2</sup> If the Sufi wants to bring about social change by setting a personal example, he cannot be dubbed as an idealist or a visionary on this ground as the great revolutionary like Lenin had to admit the efficacy of this method when he wrote, "we must show the significance of communism in practice by example".<sup>3</sup> He viewed the necessity for the use of armed force as means to be adopted in the last resort in defence of the revolution, in defiance<sup>e</sup> of its gains

1. Ibid. 63.

2. See his article on Tasawwuf in Encyclopaedia of Islam Vol. 4, P. 682.

3. V. I. Lenin, Collected works Vol. 31, P. 457. (Moscow).

against the violence of the enemies of the revolution.<sup>1</sup>  
 Hadrat Ali who has been acknowledged by all Sufi orders  
 to be the dispenser of mystic knowledge of the Prophet  
 also had to use force in the last resort in the defence  
 of social gains made by Islam. There is no place in our  
 ideal, Lenin wrote, for the use of force against people.<sup>2</sup>  
 "Our very struggle against the exploiters", he wrote when  
 the Soviets were in power, "was taken from experience. If  
 we have sometimes been condemned on account of it, we  
 can say, 'Dear capitalist gentlemen, you have only  
 yourselves to blame. If you had not offered such savage,  
 senseless, insolent and desperate resistance, if you had  
 not joined in an alliance with the world bourgeoisie, the  
 revolution would have assumed more peaceful forms.<sup>3</sup>  
 "Disarmament is the ideal of Socialism," writes Lenin.<sup>4</sup>

To resume our quest for mystic poetry, Ghaseli records  
 in his Ihya and other books the following four lines  
 written by Hadrat Ali's grandson Ali Ibn Hussein,  
 commonly known as Imam Zainul Abidin (41-99 A.H.).

یا رب جو هر علم و اوج به لقیل انت من یجد الوثنا  
 ولا استحل رجال المسلمین دی یرون اتج ما یا تونه حسنا

1-2. M. Petrosyan: Humanism (1972), Progress Publishers,  
 Moscow, P. 116.

3. Lenin, collected works (Moscow) Vol. 29, PP. 211-12.

4. Peaceful Coexistence, Moscow, 1968, P. 180.

There is much mystic knowledge (lit: essence of knowledge) which if I disclose it will be said, "You are one of those who worship the idols".

And men belonging to Muslim community would deem it lawful to shed my blood and they will consider evil what previously they thought to be good.<sup>1</sup>

Ghezali says that the knowledge due to which they think it lawful to shed his blood is the intuitive knowledge (Ilm al Ladunni<sup>2</sup>).

These verses imply a distinction between Sharia (the Highway of Sacred Law) and Tariqa (the Mystic Path), the exoteric knowledge and the esoteric knowledge and between an intellectual approach to religious and spiritual matters and dogmatism and bigotry. As a matter of fact this intellectual and esoteric approach to religion is as old as Islam itself. Prophet's cousin Ibn Abbas who is regarded as one of the greatest authority on Quranic exegeses once said, "If I were to explain the Quranic verse one who made seven skies etc. you would stone me to death."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Shermi: Yawqit wal Jawahir, Egypt, 1306 A.H.P.20.

2. Shermi: Op.Cit.

3. Quran LXV, 12.

4. Fatuhat Makkiyya Vol.I. P.32.



The famous Abu Hurayra remarked, "I learnt two things from Prophet one I have told you. If I disclose the other, my throat will be cut."<sup>1</sup>

These esoteric and intellectual interpretations inspired by the prophetic tradition saying that every Quranic verse has four meanings,<sup>2</sup> are quite in line with Sufism which, as already pointed out, is a quest for reality. Closely connected with this mystic longing for knowledge or gnosis (Marifa) is Divine Love which is, as Ghazali rightly puts in, unthinkable without the knowledge of Divinity and ultimately both rest upon a pan-theistic faith in One Real Being who dwells and works everywhere, and whose throne is not less, but more, in human heart than in the heaven of heavens as according to a prophetic traditions God says, "Heaven and earth are unable to contain me. Only the heart of my grateful servant contains me."<sup>4</sup> It is this knowledge of essential oneness and close intimacy with God which brings joy and engenders His love as the following verses recited

1. Ibid.

2. Tostari: Tafsir, 3,6;; Ghazali: Risala Ladunniya, P16  
Massignon: Essai, Page-108.

3. Ihya Vol.4. P.288.

4. Qut ul Qulub Vol.II, P.155.

by Malik Ibn Uinir (d.127) seem to indicate

ان عرفان ذي الجلال لحر و ضياء و بهجة و سرور  
و على العارفين ايضا بها و عليهم من الدرجة نور  
فهنئاً لمن عرفك الهى هو والله دهره سرور

The gnosis of the Glorified is <sup>Honour</sup> However, Light, Delight and Joy.

The gnostics, too, are enshrouded<sup>u</sup> with beauty and the light of Love falls on them.

Happy is he who knows Thee, Oh God.

By God such a man is joyful throughout his life.<sup>1</sup>

It seems desirable to remove a misunderstanding created by some orientologists (like Goldziher, Nicholson, Asin Plecio etc) who think that the ideas of love and gnoses are foreign to Islam and were borrowed by Sufis from christianism and other sources in the third century after

Hege<sup>2</sup>. But the above quoted lines by Malik Ibn Uinir who lived in the first and second centuries falsify this notion. In fact the knowledge of God and His love are the very gist of teachings of Quran which contains quite a number of verses on the theme of love between God and man as there are many prophetic traditions to the same effect.<sup>3</sup>

1. Abu Talib Makki: Qutub Qulub (Egypt 1932) Vol.II.P.26.

2. Nicholson: Mystics of Islam P.6.

3. Quran: V.57; Ihy. IV. 318 (Ghazali quotes such Quranic verses and many prophetic traditions).

Another generally held false notion is that the earliest Sufis with the exception of Rabi'ah Basri, were ascetics dominated by fear of Hell <sup>1</sup> Hassan Basri being prominent among them. It has become a common practice among the writers to stress Hassan's fear for hell. This is partly due to his brief description recorded by Jahiz <sup>2</sup> and partly due to his sermons delivered to frighten the common man away from evils and vices prevalent during the Umayyad rule. He thought warning to be a safer guide than giving false hopes as he once told Mughira bin Makharrish al Tamimi, "One who warns you through fear until you are safe is better than one who assures you of safety until you come to grief". <sup>3</sup> Moreover Hassan was not simply an ascetic; if he explained the ascetic delicacies to Forcod, he instructed Qatadah in Tafsir, 'Amr bin 'Abayd in Kalam and Ibn Ishaq in Grammar. Nothing can be falser than picturing a man of many parts like him as an embodiment of fright as he did not fear hell more than Rabi'ah who has been singled out among the earlier mystics as a symbol of Love for God. "She wept bitterly and showed signs of grief and swooned when the fire of

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1. Long before Hassan Basri, 'Amr Bin 'Abd Qays who died before 60 A.H. gave expression to mystic love for God. See Manavis: *Kokab al Durriy* Vol.I. p.129.
  2. *Bayan* (Gandouhis edition) Vol.III, P.190.
  3. *Ibid* P.162.

hell was mentioned,<sup>1</sup> writes Gharni.

In Islamic mysticism (as in Islam itself) the conception of love is closely linked with fear. Abu Talib writes, "For the lover there are seven fears. Some of them are greater than others. First is the fear of (beloveds) indifference (Iraddh) then the fear of being veiled (Hijab) is greater than the first and that of distance (Bu'd) is still greater.....Then there is the fear of losing .... A certain scholar of Sufi theosophy says one who attains to the gnosis of Allah through love only and does not combine it with fear perishes of inflation (Bust) and unrestrained (Idlal). And one who knows Him through fear without love is separated from Him due to distance (Bu'd) and bewilderment (Istihsh) and one who knows Allah through the combination of love and fear is loved by Him and He brings him near, gives him knowledge and establishes him.<sup>2</sup>

This peculiar fear is a Universal phenomenon among the holy men belonging to different religions<sup>n</sup>. It is no peculiarity of Judaism or Islam. Christianity, too, is not

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1. Tabaqat (Egypt, 1954) P.65. Ibnul Ja'uzi, Sifat al Sufwa  
Vol.IV, P.17 Published in Deccan, India in 1357 A.H.  
2. Abu Talib Makki: Op. Cit. Vol.3.PP.82-87.



without this essential religious feeling. Martin Luther remarks about God:

Yes, He is more terrible and a frightful than the Devil. For He dealeth with us and bringeth us to ruin with power..... In His majesty He is a consuming<sup>1</sup> fire. We can sometimes detect, even in the teachings of Jesus, a trace of ~~united~~<sup>weird</sup> awe and suddering dread<sup>2</sup> before the mysteries of the transcendent such as:

But fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and<sup>2</sup> body in hell.

Saint Augustine writes, "I tremble and I burn; I tremble, feeling that I am unlike Him; I burn, feeling<sup>3</sup> that I am like Him.

So far as Hinduism is concerned it suffices to refer to awful description of the theophany of terrific grandeur which follows after Krishna, the embodiment of Vishnu, has granted Arjuna's petition to behold<sup>4</sup> God Himself in His own form.

However some profound modern scholars of mysticism have

1. Luther's sermon on Exod XX, Vide Erlangen edition of Luther's works, XXXV, P.167, XLVII, P.145.

2. Matt.X.28.

3. St. Augustine, Confessions, XI.9.

4. Bhagavad Gita, <sup>ch</sup>apter XI.

come to appreciate the exact nature of the fear experienced by older Sufis. Rene Guenon has noticed this in his Essai sur les fondements de la connaissance mystique (Paris, 1897). He writes (P.90):

Le Mysticisme commence par la crainte, par le sentiment d'une domination universelle, invincible, <sup>1</sup> et devient plus tard un desir d'union avec ce qui domine ainsi. It is what Rudolf Otto calls numinous consciousness and names the object to which it is directed as mysterium tremendum.<sup>2</sup> "The qualitative content of the numinous experience", he writes, "to which 'the mysterious' stands as form, is in one of its aspects the element of daunting awfulness and majesty; but it is clear that it has at the same time another aspect, in which it shows itself as something uniquely attractive and fascinating.<sup>3</sup> And lastly we find the profoundest appreciation and evaluation of this feeling in the following lines of Goeth:

Das Schaudern ist der Menschheit bestes teil.  
Wie auch die Welt ihm das Gefühl verteuere,  
Ergriffen fuhlt er tief das Ungeheure.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Quoted by Rudolf Otto in The Idea of the Holy (Das Heilige), London, 1957, P.22.

2. The Idea of the Holy, Op.cit., P.25. 3. Ibid, P.31.

4. Age is the best of men: However the world's  
Misprizing of the feeling would prevent us,  
Deeply we feel, once gripped, the weird Portentous.

(Goethe, Faust, Second Part, Act 1, Sc.V).



Diverse are the ways, the way of truth is solitary,  
And those who tread it are isolated (from the world).  
They are unknown, their aims remain unpursued,  
They walk slowly and with care.

The people neglect what is expected of them  
All of them sleep away from the path of verity<sup>1</sup>.

Abdul Wahid ibn Zaid tells us that the mystics  
journey 'alone to the Alone. He uses the words "Ishq"  
and "shawq" to express divine love while the "Mohabbah"  
and "Hubb" are preferred by his well known fellow  
saint Rabi'ah who sang<sup>2</sup> divine love. She had been a flute  
player leading a gay life<sup>2</sup> and had seen too much of life,  
including slavery and utter poverty. Surely, she must  
have loved the mortals otherwise she could not have sung  
of divine love so passionately for

Love ..... is the scale

By which to heavenly Love thou may'st ascend<sup>3</sup>.

It leaves the heart all soft and infantine  
For rays of God's own grace to enter in<sup>4</sup>.

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1. Abu Talib Mekki, Qut al Gulub Vol.II, PP.27-28.

2. Massignon, Essai, P.192.

3. Milton, Paradise Lost, VIII, 589 ff.

4. Michael Angelo, Sonnets of Michael Angelo  
(translated by J.A.Symonds) London, 1912, P.58.



Rabiah and her contemporaries.

Rabiah of Basra is foremost among those who introduced the subject of disinterested Divine Love in Arabic poetry. "I have not served Allah from dread of Hell, for in that case I would be like a wretched hireling; nor from love of Paradise, for I should be a bad servant if I served for the sake of what was already given, but I have served Him only for His love," she replied to Sufyan al-Thawri. It was on this occasion that she is reported to have recited her oft-quoted verses on two types of love.

اجبت حبين : حب الهوى و حباً لا نك اصل لذا كما  
 فاشغى بذكرك بمن سواك  
 فاشغى بذكرك بمن سواك  
 فاشغى بذكرك بمن سواك  
 فاشغى بذكرك بمن سواك  
 فاشغى بذكرك بمن سواك

I have loved thee with two loves, a selfish love and a love worthy of Thee,

As for the love which is selfish, I am absorbed therein in your remembrance to the exclusion of others,

As for that which is worthy of Thee, there in Thou left the veils that I may see Thee.

Yet there is no praise for me in this or that,<sup>2</sup>

But the praise is for Thee, whether in that or this.

Abu Talib Nakki explains these verses at some length in his Qoot al Qulub.<sup>3</sup>

1,2. Ihya Vol.IV, P.302. Edition 1939.

3. Vol.III P.84.

Gheseli's explanation of these two types of love is briefer and clearer:

She means by selfish love, the Love of Allah for His favour and blessing by granting her immediate happiness, and by love worthy of Him, the love invoked by His Beauty and Majesty which was unveiled for her, and this is higher of the two loves and the stronger of them<sup>1</sup>.

As the verse itself indicates the phrase "love worthy of Thee" means the mystic love which is the only instrument for apprehension of divine realities. It fits the soul with wings and bids her fly towards the Ultimate Being as it is beautifully put by Michael Angelo:

Love fits the soul with wings and bids her win  
Her flight aloft nor e'er to earth decline;  
Tis the first step that leads her to the shrine  
Of Him who slakes the thirst that burns within.<sup>2</sup>

The sufi view was that man, like the phenomenal Universe is double-natured, partaking at once of Being and Not-Being, of Good and Evil, of Reality and Unreality. But as that side of him which derives from Being, and

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1. Ihy IV, 302; *ibid*

2. J.A.Symonds, The Sonnets of Michael Angelo, Smith, Elder & Co., 15, Waterloo Place, London, 1912, P.58, Sonnet No.L.III.

and which therefore alone has a real and eternal existence, is necessarily an emanation of Divinity, he is, so far, ultimately and essentially one with God. This Divine particle in man, this spark of pure Being, is ever seeking, consciously or unconsciously, to be reunited to its source; but so long as the phenomenal state lasts, the presence of the element of Not Being holds it back. Man's business is to eliminate, so far as may be, the element of Not Being, and to attain to that union with God, that absorption into the Divine, which though to be fully achieved only after the death of the body, is possible in a certain measure even in this present life. But how is one to overcome the element of Not-Being? By conquering self; for self which seems so real, is in truth the supreme illusion..... And how is self to be conquered? By Love. By Love and Love alone can the dark shadow of Not Being be done away; by Love and Love alone, can the soul of man win back to its Divine source and find its ultimate goal in re-union with the Truth<sup>1</sup>.

Rabieh transcends the Not Being by force of perfect Love and sings in a state of constant intimacy with her Lord.

انی جہلتک فی الفوادِ محرقی      و ابحت حبسی من اراد جلوسی  
فالجسم منی للجلیس موانس      و حبیب قلبی فی الفوادِ انیس

1. E.J.W. Gibb, History of Ottoman Poetry I, pp. 19-10.

I have placed Thee in my heart as one with whom I converse  
and I have made my body lawful for those who desire to sit  
near me,

And my body is friendly to one who keeps me company,  
While the Beloved of my heart occupies my soul.<sup>1</sup>

The real consummation of her love took place at  
night when none stood between her and her Love with whom  
she indulged in an amorous dialogue till the day dawned.  
During these long vigils she is said to have recited these  
lovely verses full of longing for her Divine Beloved:

یا سروری و مبینی و عبادی و انببی و عدتی و مرادی  
انت روح الفواد انت رجائی انت لی مونس و شوق ناری  
انت لولائی یا حیاتی و انسی ما تشئت فی فسیح البلاد  
کم بدت منة و کم لك عندی من عطاء و نعمة و ایادی  
حب الآن بغیتی و نعیمی و جلاء لعین قلبی الصادی  
لیس لی غلب ما حییت براح انت منی ممکن فی السواد  
ان تکن ارضیا علی فانی یا منی القلب قد بدا اسعادی

1. Ibn Khallikan, P. 182 and Awārif al-Mawārif on the margin of  
(Wafayāt)  
Ihya P. 358, Beirut 1966 edition P. 512.



O my joy and my wish and my Support,  
 My Friend and my sustainer and my Aid,  
 Thou art my Intimate, Thine longing is my provision,  
 were it not for Thee, O my Life and my Love,  
 I would not have wandered (lit. scattered) over the  
 westlands.<sup>1</sup>

How many favours have been shown to me, and how much  
 have I received, of gifts and blessing and assistance  
 Thy love is now my wish and bliss,  
 And brightness to the eye of my thirsty heart.  
 I am bound to Thee throughout my life,  
 Thou dwelleth in Blackness of my eyes  
 If thou art pleased with me, then  
 O Desire of my heart, good for-tune has begun.<sup>2</sup>

Rebi'ah instinctively felt her Lord to be the very  
 ground of her being and loved Him without any regard to  
 bodily needs. She declined all offers of marriage  
 saying "The contract for marriage is for those who  
 have a phenomenal existence. But in my case, there is  
 no such existence, for I have ceased to exist and

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1. Refer *Maire Beis* song:

I am mad with love and, who can imagine my agony?  
 Tormented by pain I wander from one wilderness to  
 another,

And can find no doctor to administer to my ailment.  
 (From *Benkey Deheri*, *Minstrels of God*, Part I (1956)).  
*Maire Beis* (1547-1614) was one of the great women poet  
 of Northern India. She was devoted to God from her  
 early childhood.

2. *Al Hureyfish*, *Al-Rawd al Faic*, P.153.

have passed out of self. I exist in God and am altogether His. I live in the shadow of His command. The marriage contract must be asked for from Him, not from me." She unconsciously thought herself to be her Lord's bride when she wrote the following poem after refusing some proposals for marriage.

راحتي يا اخوتي في خلوتي      وحيبي دائماً في حضرتي  
 لم اجد عن عواذ عرضاً      و عواذ في برايا محنتي  
 حينما كنت اشاهد حسنه      فهو محرابي اليه و قبلتي  
 ان امت وجداً وما ثم رجا      واعنائى في الورى واشقوتى  
 يا طبيب القلب يا كل الهنى      جد لوصول منك يشفى ملهجتى  
 يا سرورى وحياتى دائماً      لنشأتى منك وايضاً لنشوتى  
 قد هجرت الخلق جميعاً رغبى      منك وصله فهو اقصى منيتى

My pleasure, O my brothers, is in solitude,  
 And My Love is with me always,  
 For His love I cannot have a substitute,  
 And His love is my trial among creatures.  
 Whenever His Beauty I witness,  
 It is He who is my mihrab, toward Him lies my 'qibla'.  
 If I die of longing, and no hope is left,  
 Alas, for my distress among the people,  
 alas for my adversity,

Physician of Heart, Thou who art all my hope,  
 Be bountiful, thy union heals my soul,  
 O my Joy and my Life eternal,  
 From Thou comes my life and my ecstasy,  
 I have left all created beings and hope to be united,  
 With Thou, for that is the extreme of my desire.<sup>1</sup>

To be united with ultimate Reality through love was the sole aim of the mystics belonging to Rabiha's generation some of whom have left poetic fragments inspired by spiritual flame. Ibn al-Jauzi has recorded a few of these short poems composed by <sup>1</sup>Maymuna, <sup>2</sup>Rehman, <sup>3</sup>Shahana, <sup>4</sup>Abbas the lunatic and an unknown mad slave girl whom <sup>5</sup>utba (d.167) contacted by chance. She was clad in a cloak on which the phrase 'not to be bought or sold' was inscribed. Her beautiful quatrains recited to 'Utba sums up the entire mystical experience.

نهذا الزاهدون والعابدون اذ لم يلاهم اجاعوا البطون  
 اسروا الاعين القريحة فيه فضى ليلهم وهم ساعرون  
 حيرتهم محبة الله حتى علم الناس ان فيهم جفونا  
 هم الباذر وعقول ولكن قد شجاهم جميع ما يعرفونا

1. Ibid.

IV

2,3,3,4,5. Sifat al Sufwa Vol. III, P.122. Op.cit.

Pages 38,39,318 and 35.

The ascetics and the devotees of God starved the flesh to  
please their Lord. They kept vigils throughout the nights  
And never shut their swollen eyes.

Their love for God confused them so much  
That the people thought they were actually mad.  
Of course, they are wise, with ample wit,<sup>1</sup>  
Though their knowledge brings them anxiety.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Khatib (d.1300) belonging to the same generation  
composed the following verses which Rabi'ah often recited.<sup>2</sup>

تخصي الآله وانت تظهر حبه      هذا الحمري في الفول بدليج  
لو كان حبك صادقاً لا طعته      ان المحب لمن يحب مطيع

You rebel against God, yet appear to love Him,  
I swear by faith, this is most strange.  
If your love were, sincere, you would have obeyed Him.  
since the lover obeys his beloved.<sup>3</sup>

The mystics had come to believe that ascetic discipline  
was only a preparatory stage for higher spiritual  
experience gained through love. Sins were not avoided  
for fear of Hell but for leading a life of heart as

1. Ibid.

2. Ghazali: Ihya Vol. IV. Suhrawardhy: Awraf al Ma'arif,  
Beirut (1966) P. 507.

3. Ibid.



Ibnul Mubarik tells us:

رأيت الذنوب تميت القلوب و يتبعها الذل انما سنها  
وترك الذنوب حياة القلوب فاختر لنفسك عصيانها

I see that the sins mortify the hearts,  
And a life long disgrace follows.  
Abstaining from sins gives life to the heart,  
So choose to oppose your baser self.<sup>1</sup>

The most celebrated saint of this period Ibrahim bin Adham (d.160) who exchanged his princely state for the life of a poor labourer was motivated by divine love, as he himself tells us:

هجرت الخلق طراً في هواكا و ايتمت العيال لكي اراك  
فلما قطعت اربا ثم ارباً لما حن الفؤاد الى سواك

For Thy love I have separated myself from all creatures  
I have orphaned my children to look <sup>at</sup> after Thee.  
My heart will not cherish anything other than Thee,  
Although I be cut to pieces.<sup>2</sup>

He is reported to have said that poverty had been treasured by God and was granted only to those whom he loved.<sup>3</sup>

1. Hilye Vol.VIII, 279.

2. Izzuaddin Keshani: Misbahul Hidayah (Iran) P. 408.

3. Hilye VIII, 15.

Love and not the paradise is the goal of Mysticism according to him. "Oh God, you know," he prayed, "that the paradise does not weigh with me so much as the wing of a gnat. If you befriend me by Your recollection, and sustain me with Your love, and make it easy for me to obey you, then give Paradise to whomsoever you will."<sup>1</sup> This prayer is obviously an ecstatic utterance of contemplation. Ibrahim bin Adham's other saying "when you are alone with your Beloved, tear your garment off"<sup>2</sup> reveal that he had experienced the enthusiasm of self abandonment. It is strange that Nicholson could not find either the ecstasy of contemplation or the enthusiasm of abandonment in Ibrahim bin Adham.<sup>3</sup> His life for God did not exclude His love for His creature. Perffrom being an eccentric always absorbed in contemplation he tried to be a useful member of the society and earned his daily bread by working as a gardener or as a labourer employed for reaping the harvest. He shared his earnings with his comrades and did not believe in possession. Such small communist societies seem to be a common feature among the Sufis. A renowned mystic Ibrahim bin Adham (d.291) says

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1. Hilya Vol.VIII,35.

2. Ibid P.36.

3. There are quite a number of his sayings bearing on divine love. Orientalist generally show him a mere ascetic devoid of love for God. See Nicholson's article on him in Encyclopedie of Islam.

"We did not sit in the company of a person who sold, my shoes, because one who believes in private property is not worthy to be called a Mystic<sup>1</sup>." Another great sufi Ahmad Qalimisi (d.261) used to live with some sufis and one day asked, "Where is my wrapper?" He felt humiliated because his comrades who did not believe in private ownership were shocked to hear that.<sup>2</sup> The famous mystic Zuhayr (d.297) says, "I lived for forty years among mystic who shared things among themselves without possessing them."<sup>3</sup>

Sufis thought that world<sup>4</sup> possessions dealt a deadly blow on religion, as the following verses by Ibrahim Ibn Adham seem to indicate.

نَرَقَح دُنْيَانَا بِتَمَزِينِ دِينِنَا  
فَلَا دُنْيَانَا يَبْقَى وَلَا دِينُنَا يَنْقُصُ

We patch the world (dress) by tearing religious (garment). Neither our religion nor the patched (worldly dress) is left with us.<sup>4</sup>

Abdullah el 'A'ari (d.184 A.H.) is more explicit in condemning worldly and anti social tendencies.

1,2,3. Qashayri: Risāla.

4. Jāhiz: Bayan Vol.1. P.278, also Bilāḡ Vol.3. P.10

لله در ذوى العقول      والحرص فى طلب الفضول  
 والجاسعين المكترين      من الحيانة والخلول  
 ولهموا باطراف الفروع      واغفلوا علم الاصول  
 وتتبعوا جمع الخطام      وفارقوا أثر الرسول

How generous are the wise. Greed consists in seeking what is superfluous. The rich have collected wealth through dishonesty and fraud. They neglect the science of principles and run after its various corollaries (to justify their malpractices). They make repeated endeavours to gather the vanities of the world and have left the path tread by the Apostle of Allah.

Ahmad Bin Asim al Antaki's criticism of society is sharper and more vehement. He was born in 140/757 and died at Damascus in 215/830. He bitterly laments the religious situation prevalent in the early days of the Abbasid caliphate. The far-flung conquests of the first

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1. Hilye, Vol. VIII, P. 284: Lao Tzu says the same in his calm and placid style:

The great way is very plain and easy, but the people prefer by-paths.

While the royal palaces are well kept,  
 The fields are left weedy.  
 And the granaries empty.  
 To wear embroidered clothes,  
 To be satiated in drink and food,  
 To be possessed of redundant riches  
 This is called encouragement to robbery.  
 Is it not deviating from Tao?

Tao Te Ching LIV, translated by Chu Ko-Kao,  
 Op.cit; London, 1959, P. 68.



century of Islam brought immense power and wealth to the hands of men who exercised sway over vast territories and in their palaces lived a life of ease and luxury at the cost of exploited masses. The four Righteous Caliphs were innocent of these excesses despite their position of privilege, they maintained simple dignity and austerity of habit by following the Holy Prophet. With the succession of Husein (661-80) all was changed; worldly considerations supplanted spiritual aspirations as the basis of Government. The transference of the capital from Medina to Damascus was itself symptomatic of this decline in piety. When in due course an extravagant new capital, Baghdad, was built on the ruins of the Old Persian empire, the course of degeneracy was fully run. Antaki who had an immense historical consciousness was fully alive to this change. He tells the tale of the decline of faith in his famous ode.

افرا خبراً تقدم عهدها      وكيف بدا الاسلام از كان باديا  
 وكيف نهي حتى استتم كانه      وكيف زودى از صاير الثوب بايا  
 ومن بعد ذا عندى من العلم جرم      يفيدت علماء ان ديت كلاميا  
 الخ

Now I will tell a tale of long ago,  
 How first the Faith began, and how it grew  
 To full perfection; yea, and I will tell

How next it withered, till it hath become  
 Even as a faded garment. After this  
 I have for thee a very gem of knowledge  
 which thou canst gain, if thou wilt heed my words,  
 A knowledge copious, to scour the heart  
 Of stain and rust, and make it clean and bright,  
 True is my knowledge, clear and eloquent,  
 Precious as pearls and rubies of great price;  
 By Grace Divine I indicate the truth,  
 Being taught by God Himself, for that I live  
 within an age become exceeding strange,  
 Cruel, and terrible, wherein we need  
 Most urgently a statement of our faith  
 And intellectual arguments thereto;  
 Islam hath been most nobly eulogized,  
 As mourners praise the dear, departed dead.

BICHR IM al HARITH AL HAFI (Barefoot)<sup>1</sup>(d.237/841),  
 a native of Merve settled in Baghdad, is a still  
better critic of the society of his days. Himself an

1. Ibn Khallikan has recorded in his Wafayat the following episode which made him to resolve to remain barefoot throughout his life. Once one of his sandal thong was broken. He went to the cobbler and asked for a new one. The cobbler said, "You trouble others unnecessarily. On hearing this he threw the sandal which he was holding in his hand and removed the other from his foot and cast it away likewise pledging to remain barefoot for the rest of his life.

Hajwiri writes, "so intensely was he absorbed in contemplation of God that he never put anything on his foot. When he was asked the reason of this, he said, 'The earth is His carpet, and I deem it wrong to tread on His carpet while there is anything between my foot and His carpet.'

Kashf al Mahjub (Gr. Nicholson): 105.

embodiment of Tawakkul (Resignation) and Faqr (poverty)  
he prescribed these virtues as palliative to the diseases  
of the society.

اقسم بالله ان ضحى النوى      وشرب الماء القلب المالحه  
اعز للانسان من حرصه      ومن سوال لا وجه الكالحه  
فاستغن بالياس تكن ذا غنى      مغتبطا بالصفة الراجحه  
الياس عز والتقى سودد      ورغبة النفس لها فاضحه  
من كانت الدنيا به برة      فانها يومئذ له ذابحه

I swear it is the nobler part  
To drink the salt tears of the heart,  
And crush the detestone, then to stand  
With greed in soul, and cap in hand,  
To gain\_ for recompluse enow.  
The lowering glance and wrinkled brow.  
Then with despair be satisfied;  
'T is greater wealth than aught beside,  
A bargain to rejoice the soul.  
Despair is fine and worshipful.  
God's fear is true nobility,  
Desire leads on to infamy;  
For, let the world be fair to-day,  
It shall at last assault, and slay.

٢

X

X

X

X

X

Isn't this poetry the mirror of his life which we have sketched above? This is the most faithful expression of one's true self ever made and gives us an insight into conscience of man who was renowned for his reliance on God (Tawakkul). It is not an evidence "of the extreme pessimism of out-look as Prof. A.J. Arberry would have us believe. His despair<sup>1</sup> is related to worldly people and their exploitation of the masses. In fact this very despair is hope in God. It is a bargain to rejoice the soul,<sup>2</sup> At the same time it is the ascetic revolt against the social injustice. It brings in poetry the notions of self respect and independence and a just pride in poverty which later on became a subject of oriental poetry. Much before Bishr Hafi Hasan Basri's illustrious contemporary Masrooq Kufi used to recite the following verses full of defiance for the rich.

يَكْفِيكَ مَا خَلَقَ ابَابُ دَدْنَه دَارِ فِي عَلَيْهِ السَّيْرُ لِمَ دَجْرْدَقِ  
دَاءَ ذَاتِ بَارِدٍ ثُمَّ تَخْتَدِسُ تَعَاظُنُ أَصْحَابِ الشَّرِّهِ الْمَلْبِقِ  
نَجْشَا اِدَامَا نَعْمُ نَجْشُوا كَانَا غَزِيَتْ بِالْوَرَنِ الطَّعَامُ الْمَفْتَقِ

The coarse bread eaten with salt and cold water of the Euphrates behind the curtains and fastened door is a sufficient food for you if you oppose those who eat

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1. Sufism: p. 41.

2. See the translated passage or the original one.



greased bread with soup. Belch after eating as they do as if you have been served with dishes of many varieties.<sup>1</sup> In the same defiant mood Ibrahim bin Adham, Bishr Hafiz' ideal recited the following verse, attributed to the fourth righteous caliph Hadrat Ali.

للمنة بحر ليش الملح آكلها الذ من ثمرة تحشى برنجور

The morsel which I eat with coarsely ground salt is more delicious than the fruit filled with wasps. Bishr knew the value of adversity for spiritual elevation and remarked that grief was an angel who did not allow anybody to reside with him. The thing he valued most was that one should not be indebted to anybody save Allah and be contented with one's lot under all circumstances. Once he saw one of his fellow travellers shivering with cold for lack of clothes and recited the following verses.

قطع الليالي مع الايام في خلق والنوم تحت رواق الحمم والطلق  
احرى واعذرني من يقال غدا اني التمت الغنى من كف تخنلق  
قالوا ربيت بذات القنوع الغنى ليس الغنى كثرة المال والورق  
ربيت بالله في عسري وفي يسري فليست اسلك الا دأخ الطرق

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

1. Hilya Vol. VIII, P. 10. Qoshayri in his Risala (P. 134) writes "Ibrahim refused to accept a gift of ten thousand dinars saying, you want to remove my name from the list of the poor by offering it."

2. Divan of Ali (Beirut) P. 40.

Passing the nights in shabby clothes,  
 And sleeping under the canopy of grief and distress,  
 Is preferable, and saves me from the peoples' remark,  
 'That I sought riches from a generous hand'.

You consent to this, they say, content is wealth I plead,  
 And not excess of flocks or silver coins.  
 In distress or in prosperity, I resign to God's will.  
 I tread on no path other than the blessed one.

Bishr sought consolidation in God as the great Russian  
 mystical poet, Fedor Tyutchev (1803-1873) did under  
 similar conditions.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, Thy consolation  
 To him who in summer's heat  
 Must go in beggerly privation  
 Past gardens down the sultry street.  
 Across the wall his glances wander  
 To grassy floors and shady trees;  
 But unapproachably asunder  
 The lawns in cool abundance please.  
 'Tis not for him, the friendly greeting  
 Of trees that spread their shadows there;  
 'Tis not for him, the water fleeting  
 From fountains, like a cloud in air.  
 The grotto's call is unveiling  
 From where its azure mist is spread;  
 The fountain's dewy foam unfiling  
 Will never cool his fevered head.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, Thy consolation  
 To him who on life's road in heat  
 Must go in beggarly privation  
 Past gardens down the sultry street.<sup>1</sup>

Insistence of the mystics on poverty was in reality a protest against the ever increasing exploitation as Qushairi writes, "It is said that the excellence of a Fakir (poor) is due to the fact that he wants the muslim community to be prosperous in that he wishes to bring down the prices. Because the poor needs to purchase (at the maximum price)<sup>2</sup>

Holy Prophet who had foreseen the dangers involved in richness himself had blazed the way for Sufis by preferring poverty to riches. "Poverty is my pride", he said and prayed, "O God, make me live and die lowly (miskeen) and rise from the dead among the lowly"; he also said, "On the day of Resurrection God will say, "Bring Ye My loved ones nigh unto Me", Then the angels will say, "Who are Thy loved ones?", and God will answer them, saying, "The poor and destitute."<sup>3</sup> An angel is said to have come down to the Holy Prophet out of heaven with a message from God,

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1. G.M. Howes, A Book of Russian Verse, London, 1947, P.25.

2. Qushairi: Risala (Egypt, 1940) P.134.

3. Hajwiri: Kashful Mahjub (Tr. Nicholson) P. 19, Mustatraf, Vol. II, P.71.

saying, "These are the keys of the treasures of the earth, that they may be thine, both gold and silver; in them thou mayst dwell until the Day of Resurrection and they shall in no wise lessen the portion that is laid up for thee with God". But the Prophet rejected the proffered riches, saying, "Once I hunger, and once I am filled, <sup>1</sup> counting this offer to be a testing and trial from God. There is abundant authority in the Quran for the view that amassing of worldly possession is displeasing to God." The life of this world is but a sport, and a play, and a game, something to boast about among yourselves. <sup>2</sup> The Prophet once said to Haritha, an illustrious companion, "How farest thou, this day, O Haritha?" He replied, "Believing truly, O Messenger of God" "And what," asked the Prophet, "is the truth of thy belief?" Haritha answered, "I have turned my soul away from this world. Therefore I have thirsted by day, and watched by night, and it is as though I behold the throne of my Lord coming forth, and the people of Paradise taking joy together, and people of Hell making morn together". The Prophet said, "A believer whose <sup>3</sup> heart God has illumined: thou hast known, so hold fast". The Holy Prophet's love for the poor was connected with his condemnation of the rich.

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1. Kherrez: Kitab al Sidq (tr. Arberry) P.18.

2. Quran 57:19.

3. Kherrez: Kitab al Sidq (tr. Arberry) P.23.



Once the Holy Prophet said to his companions, "Do not sit in the company of the dead." "Who are the dead?", Enquired the Companions. The Prophet replied, "The rich"<sup>1</sup> Caliph Umar said, "Do not enter the houses of the rich because it will make hard for you to earn your livelihood"<sup>2</sup> Among the Companions of the Holy Prophet who emulated his example the preference for poverty and turning away from everything to God were common practices as Ibn Khaldun observes in the chapter on Sufism in his famous Prolegomena to his great history.<sup>4</sup> Thus sufies were prophet's heirs who practised his socialism of heart in a heartless age of greed and worldliness as his companions had done earlier as the great Muslim divine Jamaluddin

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1. Qasheyyri: Risala P. Raghib Isbahani: Muhadtrat Vol. I (Beirut, 1961) P.530. 2) Ibid.
2. It is a misfortune to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools; for these are more easily acquired than got rid of ....Most of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind. With respect to luxuries and comforts, the wisest have ever lived a more simple and meagre life than the poor. The ancient philosophers, chinese, Hindoo, Persian, and Greek, were a class than which none has been poorer in outward riches, none so rich in inward....None can be an impartial or wise observer of human life but from the vantage ground of what we should call voluntary poverty (H. D. Thoreau, Walden and Civil Disobedience, ed. Owen Thomas, New York, 1966, PP.3-9).
4. See Al-Muqaddimah, Beirut, 1961, P.863.

Afghani(1838-1897 A.D.) observes "Islamic Socialism is part and parcel of the religion of Islam; it is also closely related to the character of its people from the time when they were nomad pagans. The first to practise socialism were the great Caliphs, the Prophet's<sup>1</sup> companions who were its most zealous promulgators..... Grinne in his biography of the Holy Prophet published in 1892 has devoted many pages to the socialism<sup>2</sup> of the Holy Prophet. Contemporary Arab writers have issued books on his socialism.<sup>3</sup> The famous Egyptian Poet Shauqi in his poem named Hamza el Nabawiyya proclaims the Holy Prophet as the Leader of the Socialists.

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1. Al-Ishtirakiyya al Arabiyya (Arab Socialism) compiled by Sami A. Hanna and George E. Gardner, Leiden, 1969, P. 268.
  2. Coeuvres Choisies De C. Snouck. Eurgronje Leiden, E.J. Brill 1957. Pages 132-170.
  3. Ishtirakiyyato Mohammed Tarul Maarif Egypt.

Dhu'l-Nun has been regarded as the father of Moslem theosophy due to his mystical speculations, but his real contribution lies in classification and elucidation of the work of the earlier mystics as Massignon writes: "Wisri, comme l'a noté Solmi, est le premier à avoir défini et enseigné la classification des états mystiques (tartil al shawl) et les étapes des maîtres en sainteté (maqamat shawl al wileyah). Chez lui, l'itinéraire mystique, esbauche par Termi, prend la forme<sup>1</sup> définitive des manuels classiques du soufisme". His poems and prayers so much as they are preserved of them gave a truer impression of his mode of thought, which is marked by distinctly pantheistic tendencies.

O God, I never hearken to the voices of the beasts or the rustle of the trees, the splashing waters or the song of birds, the whistling of the wind or the rumble of thunder, but I sense in them a testimony of Thy Unity (Wahdaniya), and a proof of Thy Incomparableness; that Thou art the All-prevailing,<sup>2</sup> All knowing, the All-wise, the All-just, the All true.

In his poetry, Dhu'l-Nun used the passionate language of the devoted lover, as Rabi' of Basra had done before him, and so helped to fix a tradition that is thereafter so prominent a characteristic of Sufi literature.

1. Massignon, *Essai* 188-189.

2. Willy IX, P. 342.

امرت و ما انت ايلك صبا بتی

ولا روت من صدق حب او طاری

بني امصم  
مُنى ذی المنی

منادی المنا كل المنا انت لی منی

وانت الخنی كل الخنی عند اقضاری

بني امصم  
مَدَى

وانت مدّا سؤلی و غایه رغبتی

و موضع شکوای و مکنون اضماری

تحمل قلبی فیل مالا ابثه

وان طال سقمی فیل اوطال افراری

و بین اضلاعی منک فم ما لولائ قد بدرا

ولم یبد بادیه لاهلی و لا جاری

و بی منک فم الا حشاء داء مخامر

فقد هدمنی الرکن و اثبت اسراری

الست دلیل القوم ان هم یجروا

و منقذ من اشقی علی جرف هاری

انرت الهدی للمخذین و لم یکن

من النور فی اید یلم عشر معشاری

فقلنی بعفو منک احمی بقر به

و غشش ببیسر منک فوقی و احساری



I die, and yet not dies in me  
 The ardour of my love for Thee,  
 Nor hath Thy Love, my only goal,  
 Assuaged the fever of my soul.

To Thee alone my spirit craves;  
 In Thee my whole ambition lies,  
 And still Thy Wealth is far above  
 the Poverty of my small love.

I turn to Thee in my request,  
 and seek in Thee my final rest;  
 To Thee my loud lament is brought,  
 Thou dwellest in my secret thought.

However long my sickness be,  
 This wearisome infirmity,  
 Never to men will I declare  
 The burden Thou hast made me bear.

To Thee alone is manifest  
 The heavy labour of my breast,  
 Else never kin nor neighbours know  
 The brimming measure of my woe.

A fever ~~burns~~ burns below my heart  
 And ravages my every part;  
 It hath destroyed my strength and ~~stay~~ <sup>stay</sup>,  
 And smouldered all my soul away.

Guidest Thou not upon the road  
 The rider wearied by his load,  
 Delivering from the steps of death  
 The traveller as he wandereth?

Widst Thou not light a Beacon too  
 For them that found the Guidance true  
 But carried not within their hand  
 The faintest glimmer of its brand?

O then to me Thy Favour give  
 That, so attended, I may live,  
 And overwhelm with ease<sup>1</sup> from Thee  
 The rigour of my poverty.

Uhal Hun's poetry is more varied than Rami's by virtue of his deeper study of mystic science and superior metaphysical knowledge. His genius is both analytical and synthetical and he has enriched the Sufi theosophy with his masterly analysis of different stages of the Path attempting at the same time a synthesis of the works of his predecessors. This has widened the range of his speculations providing his poetry with a rich variety of themes. He has packed the following small poem with the mystical phenomena as various as state (hal), self resignation, trust and love without losing its artistic beauty. The conventional form of Arabic ode

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1. Bilya IX, P. 390.

(Qasida) with its imagery reflecting the bedouin<sup>u</sup> life gives the supersensuous<sup>an</sup> earthly reality and vividness.

إذا ارتحل الكرام إليك يوماً ليلتقوا حالاً بعد حال  
فإن رحا لنا حطت لترضى بحلمك عن حلول وارتحال  
نحن في خفاءك يا الهى إليك معرضين بلا عتال  
فمننا كيف شئت ولا تكلفنا تدبيرنا يا ذا الجلال

On a day when the nobles march towards Thee,  
To seek Thee time and again,  
Thy forbearance makes us unsaddle our beasts,  
And spurs us from alighting and marching away.  
We are stationed in Thy compound, our Lord,  
Flying to Thee, without any slackness.  
Tend us as Thou likest, but do not  
Let us depend on our endeavours.<sup>1</sup>

Dhul Nun's hymn to the Divinity contains his conception of the Unity of God. Like the neoplatonists he refrains from saying anything positive about the nature of the Deity. The verses embodying Divine attributes are negative statements with pantheistic import.

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1. Hilya IX, 344, 345.

رب تعالى فلا شئ يحيط به  
 وهو محيط بنا في كل مرتبة  
 ١٤ لا ين والحيث وكيف يدركه  
 ولا يحده بمقدار ولا امر  
 وكيف يدركه حد ولم تره  
 عين وليس له في المثل من احد  
 ام كيف يبلغه وهم بلا شبه  
 وقد تعالى عن الاشباه والولد  
 الاول الآخر الفرد المهيمن لم  
 يغرب ولم يدرك قرب ولا بعد  
 وجل في الوصف عن كنه الصفات ومن  
 مقال ذي الشك والحاد والعند  
 من لا يجازي بنقص من فواضله  
 ولم ينله بمدح وصف مجتهد  
 وكل فكرة مخلوق اذا اجتهدت  
 بمدحه لم تنل الا الى الابد





and veils. Then I became a bird, whose body was of Oneness and whose wings were of Everlastingness, and I continued to fly in the air of the Absolute (hawiyat) until I passed into the sphere of Purification (tanzih) and gazed upon the field of Eternity (azaliyyat) and beheld there the tree of Oneness. When I looked I myself was all those. I cried: "O Lord, with my egoism (mani-yi-man) I cannot attain to Thee, and I cannot escape from my selfhood. What am I to do?" God spoke: "O Abu Yazid, thou must win release from thy thousness by following my beloved i.e. (Mohammed)<sup>1</sup>. Bistami's sayings abound in technical terms such words as wahdaniya, shadiya, maniya, hawiya, laisiya, da'imuniya, mulekut, jabrut, labut, which suggest that he was using an established mystical Vocabulary rather than he himself created it. But he was, <sup>2</sup> "alone," sufi intoxicated by divine love who said, "His love entered and removed all besides Him and left no trace of anything else, so that it remained single even as He is single." <sup>3</sup> I fancied that I loved Him, but on consideration

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1. Hajweri Kashful Mahjub (tr. Nicholson) P.238.  
A full account of Bayezid's ascension is given in the Tadhkirat al Awliya (Nicholson's edition) Page 172-176
  2. Arberry: Revelation and Reason in Islam P.97.
  3. Nicholson's Mystics of Islam P.115.

I saw that His love preceded mine.<sup>1</sup> Bistami uses the symbolism of wine to describe his mystical states.  
 محبت من يقول ذكرت الفی وصل النبی فاذا کرما نسیت  
 شربت الحب کاساً بعد کاس فما نفذ الشراب وما رویت

I wonder at one who says, "I remember my Beloved"  
 Do I forget Him that I should remember the forgotten one?  
 I have quaffed the Love, cup after cup,  
 Neither the wine was consumed nor was I satiated.<sup>2</sup>

Bistami's contemporary Yahya ibn Muadh al Rezi (d. 258 A.H.) expressed his love in a humble manner.

اموت بدائی لا اصیب دوائیا ولا فرجا سوا الی من بلائیا  
 اذا کان داء العبد حب ملیکه فمن دونه یرجو طبیباً مداوياً

I die of disease and do not find any cure,  
 I cannot escape from what has befallen me.  
 When his Lord's Love is the disease of the slave,  
 Who can hope to find a physician for him.  
 In another short poem he gives us an interesting glimpse of the Sufi ritual of dancing, which had already so early begun to enliven their austerities and was later to become an essential feature of their spiritual life.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hilya V P.34.

2. Qoshayri: Risala P.160.

دققنا الارض بالرقص      على غيب سحائب  
ولا عيب على الرقص      لحد صبا يحم فليل  
فهدا دققنا الارض      من اذا طفقنا بواريب

The Truth we have not found;  
So, dancing, we beat the ground;  
Is dancing reproved in me  
Who wander distraught for Thee?  
In Thy valley we go around,  
And therefore we beat the ground.

The poetry written by the next generation of Gufis is more varied in describing the different aspects of the Mystic Path. It employs a number of technical terms invented for a double purpose: First, in order to facilitate the understanding of difficulties and bring them nearer to the comprehension of the novice, and secondly, in order to conceal the mysteries of the science from the uninitiated. Thus Amir bin Uthman al-Makki (d.291) uses the term Tefrid<sup>2</sup> (separation or isolation) to describe the solitary journey of the mystic as Abdul Wahid Ibn Zaid (d.177) had done before him but Uthman Makki's description is subtler and more detailed and precise.

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1. Hilya K.P.61.

2. Hujweri: Kashaf Mahjub P.

3. The meaning of separation is that one should separate ~~himself~~ oneself from all forms, and be separated in the states & one in the acts: that is, that one's action should be wholly unto God, and that there should be in them no thought of self, no respect of persons and no regard for the compensation. Moreover one should be separated in the states from those very states.



تفرد بالله الفريد فريد

فظل وحيداً أو المشوق وحيد

وذاك لأن المفردين رأيتهم  
على طبقات والد لو بعيد

فمن مفرد ليمويه قلبه

على الملك جمعا فهو عنه يحيد

وادم من سيرا في السمو توحداً

وكل وحيد بالبلاء فريد

وآخر ليمويه في الحلو تفرداً

عن النفس وحيداً فهي منه تبعد

وآخر مفكوك من الاسر بالفنا

فاصبح خلواً واجتباها ودود

Alone with a lone God he is alone.  
 One he remains, for the lover is one.  
 So I have seen them, each in his degree,  
 Those solitary seekers, and lo, he  
 That travels farthest nearest is to goal.  
 One from the witnessed world, with zeal of soul,  
 Turns, and soars upwards, upwards in his flight  
 Alone, alone, in all his suffering  
 Another upwards from his soul doth spring  
 In lonely ecstacy. In other breaks  
 The clinging bonds of selfhood, and awakes  
 Alone, yet not alone: the bounteous Lord  
 Receives His own elect with love out-poured.<sup>1</sup>

Sahi al Tustri uses the term *qalb* (heart) ~~xxxxxxxx~~<sup>2</sup>  
 to describe the unique state of the gnostics.

Mystic verse has been attributed to quite a  
 number of Sufis of the third century among whom Abul  
 Hussein Al Nuri, Abul Qasim al-Junaid, Al-Hallaj and  
 Abu Baker Shibli deserve a special notice.

#### AL NURI

Abul al Hussein Ahmed Ibn Mohammed Al Nuri (c.295/907)  
 was a pupil of Sari al Saqati and Mohasibi whose  
 doctrine of love (Mohabbah) he preached with such a

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1. Kalabadhi: Ta'arruf (edited by A.J. Arberry and  
 published from Cairo) PP. 81-82.

2. Wisan of al Hallaj ed. Messiaen P. 115.

zeal which brought him close to death. He advocated "I know pure i.e. loving God without hoping for any recompense. All of his ascetic practices are motivated by this selfless love. Even the highest stage of passing away (Fana) is sought for the nearness of the Beloved.

ارانی صبی فی قتائی تقربا و هیجات الا منک عند التقرب  
فما عند لی صبر ولا نیک صیلة ولا منک لی بد ولا عند صحراب  
تقرب قوم بالرضا فوق صلتهم فما لی بعید منک والکل لیطرب

I had supposed that, having passed away  
From self in concentration, I should blaze  
A path to Thee; but ah. No creature may  
Draw nigh Thee, save on Thy appointed ways.  
I cannot longer love, Lord, without Thee;  
Thy hand is everywhere: I may not flee.  
Some have desired through hope to come to Thee,  
And Thou hast wrought in them their high design.  
So, I have severed every thought from me,  
And died to selfhood, that I might be Thine.  
How long, my heart's Beloved? I am spent:  
I can no more endure this banishment.

This is the interpretation given by Kalabadhi.  
My state made me suppose that my concentration on Thee  
and my passing away from all other than Thee was a  
means of drawing near to Thee. But concentration and  
passing away are attribut<sup>es</sup> and nearness to Thee is not  
obtained through any attribute of mine, but only through  
Thee, in so far as it proceeds from Thee. He continues:  
Some people have sought to come near Thee by virtue of

their deeds and acts of obedience, and Thou didst join them to Thee of Thy bounty. I have no deeds whereby to draw near to Thee, and I am perishing of my longing to be near Thee: Yet I have no means of myself to come thither.<sup>1</sup> Nuri's interpretation of his experience has a close affinity with the doctrines of his two great contemporaries. He seems to hold, like al-Hallaj, that the divine union depends upon grace and comes close to expounding al-Jonaid's doctrine of Fana (passing-away) and Baqa (continuance). The state of mind described in the poem has been named by al-Jonaid as Bata (trial) as it is a source of affliction for the mystic who yearns for the Beloved after having been returned to continued existence.

#### AL-JONAI D

Jonaid b. Mohammed b. Jonaid was the greatest mystical genius of his time and is rightly called chief of the sufi community (Sayyid al-Taifa). Jafer Khuldi says, "Among our Sheikhs we did not find any one who combined knowledge with the mystic state (hal) except Abul Qasim al-Jonaid. Most of them possessed much knowledge but did not have mystic state while there were some who had much of mystic state but a little knowledge. Jonaid had a high mystic state and a sound knowledge<sup>1</sup>. Whereas others before him and his contemporaries had by brilliant flashes of intuition grasped one or another of the spiritual

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibn al-Jauzi: Safwa volume II P.235.



heights now falling to their mastery, he, standing as it were upon the supreme mountain-peak of analytical thought, took within his ranging vision the whole landscape of mystical speculation stretching below him, and with an artists' eye brought it to comprehension and unity upon a single canvas. In a series of letters and brief tracts brought but recently to light, he sketches in profoundly subtle, deeply meditated language a consistent system of Islamic theosophy which has certainly not been improved upon, and which formed the nucleus of all subsequent elaboration. His masterly analysis of the Sufi experience of fana and the classic definition of Tauhid i.e. unification ("the separation of the Eternal from that which was originated in time") are landmarks in the history of Sufism. When asked about Tauhid ul Khas (special Unity) he replied, "special unity means that the man should behave like a dead body before Allah, by dying to self (Bil fana an nafsini) and to the call of people and thus know the realities of His existence and unity in the reality of His nearness with the loss of his sensation and movement so that Allah may do whatever He likes with him i.e. the end of the man may become his beginning so that he may be in the same state in which he was before he existed". Continuing this he says "The proof for this return to the same state in which he was

before he existed) is the Word of God: "when thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam . . . from their loins, their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves (saying): "Am I not your Lord?"<sup>1</sup> They said: "Yea . . . who existed (at this time)? How did he exist before existence? Who ~~was~~<sup>but</sup> the holy, chaste and sweet spirits could have responded to His call in accordance with His omnipotence and perfect will. So now he is as he was before his existence.<sup>2</sup> This is the extreme reality of the Unity of the worshipper (Nowahhed) for the One (Wahid)"<sup>3</sup> This fana described by Joneid in connection with his explanation of his special tawhid is in reality an existence of its own kind which God bestows upon the worshipper. According to him when God grants this existence to His worshipper He causes His desire to flow over him as He wills and this type of existence is the most perfect one. In this existence no human quality survives nor does normal human existence continue. He is completely over-powered by God, who is pleased with him and shows His kindness but no one can know the nature of His kindness and pleasure because they are divine. This spiritual existence is not of God in him, the gift of God to the worshipper. Joneid describes this state of bliss caused by the flow of God's desire over his worshipper in this lyric.

1. Quran VII, 172. 2. This is obviously monism.

3. This extract which is a continuation of the reply given by Joneid was omitted by Nasheiri. I was able to locate it amongst the tracts and writings of Joneid (Risala No. 16) published by E.J.W. Gibb Memorial.

سرت باناس في الغيوب قلوبهم  
 عراضا بقرب الله في ظل قدسه  
 فحلوا بقرب الماحد المتفضل  
 تحول بجوار رحمتهم وتنقل  
 مواردهم فيها على العو والخص  
 ومصدر نعم عنها لما هو المكن  
 ..... الح

His desire flew over their hearts and they (worshippers)  
 delighted in the neighbourhood of the Glorified and Excellent One.  
 They enjoy God's nearness under the shadow of His Glory  
 where their spirits move and stir  
 They go there to find honour and exaltation,  
 and return with all perfections.  
 They march with the unique glory of His attributes  
 with trailing robes of Unity they move  
 what happens next is beyond description.  
 1  
 let it remain a secret.

Their presence before God is their absence and enjoyment of the  
 vision of God is the reward of their constant exercises. But at  
 a certain stage mystic's spirit loses the unseen bliss, when  
 God brings the spirit to its I-ness and its normal state returns,  
 it is veiled from the spiritual experience which it was having  
 and of which it was possessed. Thus it grieves and gets used to  
 its normal state, for it has lost its first perfection and the  
 greatest favour and has again come to the domain of perception  
 and reason. Its regret is deep and its sorrow for the loss  
 shadows its consciousness and the normal existence and it is for  
 this reason that it hastens to desire and its needs return to it  
 Why should it not feel injured when it is banished from God after  
 its absence, and is empty after being full. So in this state soul  
 Royal Volume IV P.327; Miyai quotes only first three verses.

of the gnostics seek after the verdant fields, the beautiful vistas, and the green gardens .. everything except these is a source of pain for them because it reminds them of their first (blissful) state and of the Beloved"... This state of longing for the loss of that spiritual state and noble relationship with God is called *Bala* (Ordeal). This (*Bala*) thirst from God for God is an anguish more painful than the mourning of the dear departed.<sup>1</sup> This ordeal consumes the mystic's spirit and he feels as if his heart is set to fire as Jonid himself expresses it.

O, the Burner of fire in my heart with thy omnipotence,  
If thou willed Thou would have extinguished it with Thyself.  
I won't be blamed if I die out of fear and anxiety  
For what Thou hast done to me.

This sting of *Bala* assuages gradually and the gnostic gets used to it and derives spiritual pleasures from it. "Then, after he has not been, he is where he had been (before creation). He is himself, after he has not been really himself. He is present in himself and in God, after having been present in God and absent in himself. This is because he has left the intoxication of God's overwhelming control (*Ghaleba*), and come to

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1. Junaid: Kitebul Fane. Compare: "When the vision disappeared St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) felt sharp suffering mingling with the ecstasy of the first moments".

James H. Leuba, the Psychology of Religious Mysticism, London  
Kegan Paul, 1925, P. 54, Paul Sabatier, Life of St. Francis of Assisi, London 1894, PP. 295-96.



clarity of sobriety (sahw) and contemplation is once more restored to him, so that he can put everything in its right place and assess it correctly.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Joneid expresses this spiritual experience in a short lyrical poem which Gerrej Tusi quotes as an example of the knowledge of dual state of union and separation (warifat<sup>2</sup> / Jam Nat tafriq<sup>3</sup>)

Now I have known, O Lord,  
 what lies within my heart;  
 In secret, from the world apart,  
 My tongue hath talked with my Adored.  
 So in a manner we  
 United are, and one;  
 Yet otherwise ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ disunion  
 Is our estate eternally.  
 Though from gaze profound  
 Deep eve hath hid Thy Face,  
 In wondrous and ecstatic Grace  
 I feel Thee touch my innermost ground.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Al-Joneid, Risala No.10.

2. Kitabul-Lumme P.212; Risala Qashairi: P.39.

3. Compere:

God comprises, but is not, the Universe. So, too, God comprises, but is not, my self. Martin Buber, I and Thou Op. cit. P.95.

Junaid has summarized the true nature of the supreme mystical experience. He expresses the "identity in difference" which Mr. W.T. Stace after his lengthy philosophical inquiry considered to be the real nature of mystical state but could not find clearly stated in any medieval mystic. He writes, "We are likely to get on this matter, I believe, if we took as contemporary evidence of the experience of "melting away" and merging with the infinite, such as we find in cases like those of Tennyson and Kestler. As I have before observed they are Psychology-conscious in a way in which classical and medieval mystics were not. Their introspection is far more likely to be accurate and instructive to us even though they lack in many respects the greatness of the old mystics. Identity in difference is plainly expressed here. Inasmuch as I have been dissolved in the Infinite Being and have ceased to exist as myself, I have become identical with that being; but in as much as I still feel, that I Kestler or Tennyson, experience peace or blessedness, I still remain my individual self and distinct from the Infinite Being. Do not these two passages clearly throw light back upon the more obscure utterances of Eckhart and <sup>1</sup> Suso? I do not see how it can be doubted that both they and these modern authors had the very same experience of this fading away. But the elder mystics expressed it in obscure and ambiguous language, the moderns more clearly and precisely. What has just been said of the passages from Tennyson and Kestler may therefore be taken as applying to Eckhart and <sup>1</sup> Suso. They too must have experienced this same identity in difference. "

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1. W.T. Stace: Mysticism and Philosophy Op.cit. Pages 245, 246.

"He was an enamoured and intoxicated votary of Sufism. He had a strong ecstasy and a lofty spirit. The Sufi Shaykhs are at variance concerning him. Some reject him, while others accept him..... Some accuse him of magic..... But of all these Shaykhs only a few deny the perfection of his merit and the purity of his spiritual state and the abundance of his ascetic practices. It would be an act of dishonesty to omit his biography from this book..... Some orthodox theologians reject him on the ground that his sayings are pantheistic (ba'mani\_yi iatizaj u ittihad) but the offence lies solely in the expression, not in the meaning. A person overcome by rapture has not the power of expressing him<sup>self</sup> correctly..... In conclusion, you must know that the sayings of al-Hallaj should not be taken as a model, in as much as he was an ecstatic (maghlub an dar hal\_i\_khud), not firmly settled (muta makkin), and a man needs to be firmly settled before his sayings can be considered authoritative. Therefore, though he is dear to my heart, yet his "path" is not soundly established on any principle, and his state is not fixed in any position, and his experiences are largely mingled with error. When my own visions began I derived much support from him, that is to say, in the way of evidences (barahin)..... His inspired sayings recall the first visions of the movies, writes Ali Hajveri about Hallaj in an apologetic manner and under-estimates him. Louis Massignon's criticism of this estimate is a very significant and worth quoting. He writes, "Hajweri, esprit

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1. Kashf ul Mahjub, op.cit. Pages 150-152,

d'une erudition desordonnee, nous a laisse en son Keshf el web joub une notice sur el Hellej qui temoigne de plus commique emberres, il essaie de dedoubler la personelite del Hellej, d'attribuer a un autre les actes de sorcellerie ~~xxxxxx~~ et les heresies dont on le accuse, ce qui n'est qu'un expedient tactique; il reduit ainsi son heros a etre une sorte de fentoche, un excentrique in offensif, aux discours dese quilibres par l'ext-se. La comme ailleurs la facon de raison<sup>ner</sup> d'el Hajioiri nous montre en lui un eleve studier, desireux de comprendre ce dont ses maitres ont parle, mais d'esprit futile, sans fermete d'analyse, flottant et inconsis<sup>1</sup> tent. Such defensive accounts of el Hellej were necessitated by the fact *that* he was executed apparently on religious grounds by the authorities who were actually motivated by political reasons. It was a common practice in Asia to give the political issues a religious colouring. All political crimes were cloaked in the mantle of religion.<sup>2</sup> Al Hellej was a victim of political interests and his execution was the result of a conspiracy hatched against him by ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Insane leader Abu Sahl as Louis Messingnon writes, "Mais quand el Hellej convertit de hauts fonctionnaires, et prit pied dans l'entourage du Khelefa (dont les aspiration etaient et redeviendront shi'ites), Abu

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1. La Passion d'el Hellej Vol. I. P. 408.

2. Abul Kalam Azad: Preface to the Sarmad's quatrains; Sarmad was similarly killed apparently on religious ground while the motive of his murder was purely political. The saint was a friend of Vera Chikoba.



Sahl sentit le danger de laisser se développer à la cour une "mystique" indépendante, purement sunnite, basée sur les éléments soufis, comme celle d'el Hallelj; elle risquait de ruiner l'autorité morale de la légende alide, soutenue par l'ulanisme. Il y avait là un péril politique pour tous le parti des hauts fonctionnaires adhérent à l'ulanisme". So this being his danger, now the problem before Abu Sahl was that of getting "fetters" from sunnite ulema against him and for this purpose he hatched an elaborate conspiracy which resulted in el Hallelj's murder. Moreover the economic crisis faced by the people due to the luxuries of the young Caliph might have helped Sahl's designs and the authorities might have used el Hallelj as a scape goat to divert the public attention from the high cost of living as el Hallelj was a revolutionary who never ceased from improving the lot of the people. He wanted to transform the lives of his fellow creatures by preaching those rules of life which he had found good for himself and preached among the Muslims as well as among the idol worshippers. In fact el Hallelj's execution was the culminating point of the revolutionary movement of the third century as Professor Gibbs following observations seem to indicate. "At first the leaders were of the class of Ulema. But in the course of the third century their place was taken by men who had not been brought up in the traditional religious disciplines, but who belonged for the most part to the lower middle or artisan classes of the town, especially from the mixed half Persian, half-Arabized Arab population of Baghdad. At the same time, too, certain implications of a social character began to enter into what was primarily a religious

Movement. While avoiding the political revolutionary aims of the Shi'ite propagandists, it implied a protest none the less against the social and political abuses which appeared to be ~~condemned~~ condoned by the official Sunni Ulama, but its programme of reform was bound up with the awakening of the religious conscience of individuals and the consequent reaction of this spiritual revival on the social organization of the Community. These social implications were probably reinforced by the labours of the Sufis in preaching to and converting members of their own class, as well as their missionary labours in other fields. For at all times in all countries the ascetics and Sufis were the most active propagandists of Islam.

For both these reasons, the gradual breaking away from the orthodox control caused by the new proletarian leadership, and new social implications, the Sufi movement began to be regarded with suspicion by the orthodox Ulama and the authorities, and still more by the Shia. The suspicion grew as the Sufi leaders became more 'advanced' in their views and bolder in giving expression to them, and the rift seemed to be widening between Sufism and orthodoxy. Some attempts were made to silence them, when they failed, an example was made of the most prominent of them, a wool-carder, Huseym Ibn Mansur al Hallaj, who was charged with heresy in having identified himself with God was<sup>1</sup> cruelly executed at the beginning of the fourth century.

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1. H. A. R. Gibb: Mohammedanism (Paperback), 1969, P. 91.

Far from being an aberrant case in the Islamic community of his time, Hallaj presents the type achieved by the mystic vocation which the meditation on Qura'n and interiorisation of life of worship with humility and religious fervour never ceased to generate in Islam during the earlier centuries. The presentation of his doctrine is based on the terminology fixed by his fore-runners. Nearly all his vocabulary, his principal allegories and even his rules of mystic life can be traced back to earlier sufis. His originality consists in the superior cohesion of the definitions and the firmness of intention which leads him to the public affirmation, at the cost of his life, of a doctrine, which his masters dared not render accessible to all. Hasan Basri and Ibn Adham formulated three phases of mystic life: Firstly the ascetic phase consisting of penitence and general contrition; second phase consisted of passive purification; and third phase was that of the life of Union. Hallaj talks of these very phases when he mentions three types of asceticism. Renounce this base world, and this is the ascetism of senses. Renounce the other world as well, and this is the ascetism of heart. Renouncing one's own self is the ascetism of the spirit. Here is the table of terms chosen by al Hallaj for describing these three phases.

- I. Asceticism: tahdhib - ta'arib - tafriid
- II. Passive purification: lotirar - hale - istikh<sup>la</sup> and  
 al nasoutiyah - Khala, fama an awsaf al bashriyah. The  
 purified one is the loved, one desired by God; the Wahdani  
 al dhat, one whose essence has been unified by God; the  
 Siddiqe

III. Life of Union: 'ayn al Jam' - raf al anniyah<sup>1</sup> - the qaim  
 bil Haqq, and the two reciprocal qiyams: qiyam bi haqqi ke,  
 and qiyam ke bihaqqi: The motto. The following description of

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union given by 'all Hellej reminds that of el Joneid.  
 "Some of the signs of his omnipotence (Rabouhiyyah) are the breezes of pity which He sends towards the hearts of His lovers giving them the good tidings of the removal of the veils of reserve so that they may fold the extended carpet of love without any fear and then He gives them there the drink of the wine of intimacy and the breezes of generosity blow over them. Then he deprives them of their qualities and xxix vivifies them with His own qualities and attributes because one standing separated cannot fold the carpet of the exalted God until he sees all the essences as a single essence and until he sees what is perishable as perishable and what is subsistent as what is subsistent."<sup>1</sup>

In the essence of the Union ('ayn 'al Jaw') all the actions of the saint remain coordinated, voluntary and deliberated by his intelligence but are entirely sanctified and divinised. The divine unity is not the result of the destruction of mystic's personality. It is its perfection, consecration and divinisation and in fact its free and living organ. This is what al Hellej ultimately discovered and preached vehemently after 295/907. He cried out of joy for having found what was at the bottom of the ecstasy. The divine union results in amorous espousals in which the creator joins the creature and embraces and he has an intimate dialogue with him/his Beloved using the words 'I' and 'I'. There is no Arabic speaking mystic whose language is as chaste and ardent as that of al Hellej. No symbol of profane love is transposed.<sup>2</sup>

1. Solami Tafsir Quran XXX, 45. quoted on 54 of Texts Hellejienne appended to Essai: Messignon.

2. Messignon: La Passion d'al-Hellej (Paris, 1922) pp. 116-117



لی جیب ازور فی الخلوٰات      حافر غائب عن المخلوقات  
 ما ترانی اصغی الیه بسبح      کی اعی ما یقول من کلمات  
 مکات من غیر شکل ولا لہق      ولا مثل لغتہ الاصوات  
 فکانی خائب کنت ایاہ      علی خالوس بذاتی لذاتی  
 حافر غائب قریب بعید      وهو لم تہود رسوم الصفات  
 صوادنی من الصیر الی الوسم      وافی من لائح الخطرات

I have a Beloved whom I visit in solitude, always present although invisible to the sights.

You won't see me lending an ear to Him to listen to the words He speaks.

His words are without form and elocution, nor they resemble any melody of voices.

As if I have become my own interlocutor and communicate through my own inspiration with my own essence in my own essence.

He is Present, absent, near and far, the descriptions of qualities cannot encompass Him.

He is nearer than conscience for the imagination and more intimate than the flashes of inspirations.

The last three verses are distinctively pantheistic. They seem to convey the idea of God's immanence in everything. But Hallaj combines His transcendence with His immanence which is the commonly accepted notion in Sufism. So long as transcendence is recognised, the most emphatic assertion of immanence is not strictly pantheism but panetheism, not the doctrine that all is God, but the doctrine that all is in God, who is also above all. Hallaj has devoted full chapter to God's transcendence

1. Compare. speech can renounce all the media of sense, and it is still speech. Martin Buber, Between Men & Men, London, p. 3

2. Vivien (Messiaen) P. 47.

(Chapter X, Tawasin al Tawasin) in his Tawasin<sup>1</sup>. In the last chapter of this book he clearly says, "God is God and the creatures are only creatures. No objection to it. '(Al Hago Hago, Wal Khelgo Khelgo, Wale Bas)<sup>2</sup>'. But this does not mean God's separation. He is inelienally united with the saint. God's separation. He is inelienally united with the saint.

In Bustan al Ma'rifa (Tawasin XI)<sup>3</sup> Hallelj gives us brilliant flashes of insight into the problem of gnosis. "One who says that he attains gnosis by losing himself may be asked how the lost one can find one who is there (maujood)". "The other says that he knows Him through his existence. But this is not true because there cannot be two eternal ones." And one who says that he knows Him through ignorance may be told that ignorance is a veil and gnosis is what is behind the veil. One who says that he knows Him through His creation thinks His creation sufficient with the exclusion of the Creator. And the one who thinks that he can know Him through incompetence ('Ajz) is only cut off, and one who is disconnected cannot attain the gnosis. One who says that he knows Him as He makes Himself known to him and alludes to science and comes to the known and known is outside the essence and one who is outside the essence cannot catch the essence". One who says that I know Him as He has described Himself is only content with the report without any direct knowledge". Through

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1. Al-Hallelj: Kitab al Tawasin (edited) by Louis Massignon)  
Paris 1913, Pages 63-68.

2. Ibid page 78.

3. Tawasin, Op.cit: Pages 69-78.

this dialectics of love Kallaj tries to bring home the fact that there is no way to gnosis save grace. The man cannot have Merife simply with the force of his will. Neither can he reach this stage by renouncement or self negation. This is possible only through a supernatural communication as the result of Divine grace. This gnosis is something experimental and morous. It is a spontaneous transformation by divine intervention. It seems as if the mystic is called by His Lord and he is only responding to His call.

لبیک لبیک یا سری و بخوانی لبیک لبیک یا قصدی و معنائی  
 ادعوت بل انت تدعونی الیک فضل تاریت ایاک ام ناجیت ایاک  
 یا عین عین وجودی یا یدی صهی یا منطقی و عباراتی و اعیانی  
 یا کل کلی یا سمعی و یا بصری یا مجسم و تبا عینی و اجزائی

Here am I, Here am I .

O my secret and my confidence .

Here am I, here am I . O my goal and my object.

I call Thee .... no, it is Thou who callst me towards thee.

Have I voiced" it is thee" or have thou whispered, " it is me"

O the essence of the essence of my existence, O the extent of my intent, O my elocution, my enunciation and my mumbling.

O the whole of my whole . O my direction and sight . O my totality, composition and part.

When it has reached to its term the consciousness finds itself possessed by the sense of a Being at one end and the

some time greater than the Self and identical with it: great enough to be God, intimate enough to be me.<sup>1</sup> This is the mystic union which is the only possible fulfilment of mystic love: since

All that is not One must ever  
Suffer with the wound of Absence,  
And whoever in Love's city  
Enters, finds but room for One  
And but in Oneness, Union.<sup>2</sup>

Thus mysticism is seen to be a highly specialized form of that search for reality, for heightened and completed life, which is a constant characteristic of human consciousness. It is largely prosecuted by that spiritual spark which remains below the threshold in ordinary men. Emerging from its hiddenness in mystic, it gradually becomes the dominant factor in his life; subduing to its service, and enhancing by its saving contact with reality, those vital powers of love and will which we attribute to heart. Under the spur of this love and will, the whole personality rises in the acts of contemplation and ecstacy to a level of consciousness at which it becomes aware of a new field of perception. All mystical thinkers agree in declaring that there is a mutual attraction between the Spark of the Soul, the free divine germ in man, and the Point from

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1. E. Reclus: Essai sur les fondements de la connaissance Mystique. Paris 1897 P. 45.

2. Jemi. Quoted in Jalaluddin Rumi (Wisdom of the East Series) P. 25.



which it came forth. "We long for the Absolute", says Royce, "only in so far as in us the Absolute also longs, and seeks, through our very temporal striving, the peace that is nowhere<sup>1</sup> in Time, but only, and yet Absolutely, in Eternity". "God needs man", says Eckhart and the great Persian mystic poet Rumi expresses this fundamental idea of the mutual quest of the Soul and the Absolute in the terms of another symbolism:

No lover ever seeks union with his beloved,  
But his beloved is also seeking union with him.  
When in this heart the lightning spark of love arises,  
Be sure this love is reciprocated in that heart.  
When the love of God arises in thy heart,  
Without doubt God also feels love for thee.<sup>2</sup>

In this supreme mystical state Al-Hallaj is convinced of his essential identity with the Ultimate Being:

انا من اهوى دين اهوى انا      نحن روحان حللنا به نانا  
فاذا ابصرته ابصرته      واذا ابصرته ابصرته  
من جت روحك روحى كى      تمزج الخمر بالماء الزلال  
فاذا سلك شئ سنى      فاذا انت انا فى كل حال

I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I

We are two spirits dwelling in one body.

If thou seest me, thou seest Him,

And if thou seest Him, thou seest us both.

Thy spirit is mingled in my spirit even as wine is mingled with pure water. When anything touches Thee, it touches me. So, in every case Thou art I.

1. Royce, The World and the Individual, Vol. II, P. 386.

2. Jalaluddin Rumi (wisdom of East series) P. 77.

This mystic illumination leads Al-Hallaj to look upon Satan as a lover like himself. He was perhaps the first poet of the world who treated the Archangel sympathetically and depicted him like a suffering hero long before Milton portrayed Satanic <sup>1</sup> grandeur.

When accused of pride by God Satan pleads, "Pride was only possible if I had been with Thee for the duration of a single <sup>2</sup> regard". He accepts his fall in the spirit of a lover. His love is too intense to admit of any distance although he has been turned away from divine presence.

خفاي بعبادتي لبدك بعد      تيقنت ان القرب والبعد واحد  
وانى دان اصبحت فالحجر صدى      وكيف ليح الحجر والحب واحد  
لك الحمد فى التوسل فى حقك فليس      لعبد زكى ما لغيرك ساجد

There is no eliation for me, distance from Thee is no distance for me. I have come to believe that distance and nearness are one and the same thing.

If as for me, if I am separated, still Thy separation is my companion.

Moreover how can this separation operate when we are one in <sup>3</sup> love (Literally: when our love is one).

Praise to Thee for thy providence, in

Thy inaccessible essence, to thy pious servant who is not going to prostrate before any one except Thee. <sup>4</sup>

1. Paradise Lost, book I.

2. Kitab al Tawasin: ed: Messignon: 1913 ~~xxxix~~ Page 43-44.

3. If we read "Wajid" instead of Wahid then the line will be: "when the love can find".

4. Kitab al Tawasin : Op.cit. PP. 44, 45.

Even in his refusal Iblees is humble and loving. When God says "You don't prostrate, O you disgraced one", Iblees replied, "I am a lover, and it is true that the lover is disgraced <sup>1</sup> (Maheem)" Then he pleads to God, "All choices lie with Thee including the choice of my prostration. Thou hast chosen for me, O the Marvellous one. If thou hast forbidden me from prostration Thou art the forbider. If I have spoken incorrectly please don't remove me. If you desire that I should prostrate before him I submit to Thy Will. There is no gnostic among the gnostics whose knowledge about Thee is superior to that of mine<sup>2</sup>."

لا تلعنني فالعلم مني لجيد واجر سيدى فاني وحيد  
ان في الوعد وعد الحق حقا ان في البدء بدء امرى شديد  
من اراد ان يكتب هذا فلي فارقوا اذا علموا بانى شهيد

Do not blame me, because I am far from what is reproachable. Patronise me, as I am solitary. Thy promise is indeed well kept and the beginning of my affair is really hard. Here is my declaration for one who wants to write it down:  
Read it and know that I am a martyr.<sup>3</sup> Hellej seems to identify himself with Satan and he projects his pantheistic ideas through him.

1. Tawasin P. 52.

2. Ibid P. 53.

3. Tawasin P. 53; Tawasin (Massignon) P. 51.

محمودى مبدى تقدس دى على مبدى تحوسس  
وما آدم الا انت دى فى انفس ابليس

My disobedience is in reality Thy glorification and my reason is consumed by Thy love. Adam is nothing but Thyself. And who is the isolated Satan (except Thyself)?

Shihab el Din Mohammed el Alousi († 1270/1853),<sup>2</sup> the author of the tafsir "Rauh al Ma'ani" quotes the above two verses among the examples of pantheism (Makdat al Wasmoud) and he puts "Kaun" in place of "Beyn" of the last line. In this way the last line may be translated as: And Iblees does not exist at all.

Some of these pantheistic utterances of 'Al Hallaj have been alleged to preach the doctrines of "Koloul" (Incarnation) such as the following.

سبحان من الميزنا سوتة سر سنا لا يعونه الثاقب  
ثم بدا لخلقك طاهراً فى صورة الآكل والشارب  
حتى لقد عاينه خلقه كل نظرة الى حب بالحب

Glory to Him who created His Humanity as the secret of the light of His radiant Divinity.

Then Marx He appeared for His creation in the form of one who eats and drinks. Until His creatures saw Him with a glance<sup>3</sup> which goes from one eye brow to another.

Louis Messignon thinks that the first verse makes<sup>4</sup> allusion to the scene when the angels were called upon to recognise in Adam the "Howa", howa".

1. Tawasin P.43.

2. Tawasin Op.cit. P.XXIV.

3. Deven (Messignon) P.41. Tawasin (Messignon) P.130.

4. Tawasin P.131.



The verses that follow apply, according to Messiaen, to the theory of "shahid al anī" in the person of Jesus Christ. The whole tercet (triplet) is, according to him, the testimony of the efforts that Al-Hallaj made for naturalising in Islam an idea derived from the vocabulary of Theology of Syria

~~vocabulary of Theology~~  
Christianity, -- the idea of the two natures of Deity, the "Lahut" and the "Nasut". These two christian terms, in fact, designate two natures of christ, the Uncreated Word, his eternal divine nature, and the human nature which he assumed through incarnation. Al-Hallaj was a pantheist rather than a "holouli". He does feel his identity with God but does not limit Him to himself or to any other person or place. According to him it is infidelity to say that God is Christ alone or you alone or I alone or to limit Him in any form whatsoever, even in a conceptual form.

رأيت ربي بعين قلب فقلت من انت قال انت  
فليس بالان منك اين وليس اين بحيث انت  
فليس للدر منك وضع فنعلم الوهم اين انت  
انت الذي حركت في اين فجوذا اين فأتين انت

I saw my Lord with the eye of my heart; and asked Him, "who art Thou"? He replied "Thee". It is true because "where" is lost in Thee and "where" does not exist in relation to Thee. Time cannot imagine Thee so that it may be able to teach Imagination where Thou art. It is Thou who embraces all "where" including "Non where". Go where can thou be?

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1. Ibn 'Arabi in his Tafsir of Quran changes the first line of this short piece by substituting "Rabbi" for Qalbi and writes: Futuhāt: Vol.I, 379, Cairo edition.

God is you and I and everything else in the Universe. He is all that is perceptible and imperceptible; material or spiritual. He is everything and everywhere. It is a folly to confine him to heavens.

وأي الارض تخلص منك حتى تحاولوا يطلبونك في السماء  
تراهم ينظرون اليك جهراً وهم لا ينتظرون من العراء

What place is devoid of Thee that the people seek Thee in the sky? Thou seest them apparently looking at Thee while they do not see Thee due to their blindness.<sup>1</sup>

Many of his verses could be quoted to establish that Al-

Kelaj was a pantheist and not a "Keloulis". The Keloulis, i.e. those who believe in incarnation, are repudiated by Sufis in general quite as vehemently as by orthodox Muslims. But while the former have unhesitatingly condemned the doctrine of keloul, they have also done their best to clear Kelaj from the suspicion of having taught it. Three main lines of defence are followed: (1) Kelaj did not sin against the Truth, but he was justly punished in so far as he committed a grave offence against the Law. He "betrayed the secret of his Lord" by proclaiming to all and sundry the supreme mystery which ought to be reserved for the elect. (2) Kelaj spoke under the intoxicating influence of ecstasy. He imagined himself to be united with the divine essence, when in fact he was only united with one of the divine attributes. (3) Kelaj meant to declare that there is no essential difference or separation

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1. Diven, Op.cit. Page 47 Cf. Tennyson, The Higher Pantheism:

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills, and the plains.

Are not, these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

between God and His creatures, in as much as the divine unit includes all beings. A man who has entirely passed away from his phenomenal self exists as his real self, which is God.

It was not Halleluj who cried "Ana'l-Haq", but God Himself, speaking, as it were, by the mouth of selfless Halleluj, just as He spoke to Moses through the medium of the burning bush (Quran 20: 8-14).

The last explanation, which converts Ana'l-Haq into an impersonal monistic axiom, is accepted by most Sufis as representing the true Hallelujian teaching. In a magnificent ode Jalaluddin Rumi describes how the One Light shines in myriad forms through the whole Universe, and how the One Essence, remaining ever the same, clothes itself from age to age in the prophets and saints who are its witnesses to mankind.

"Every moment the robber Beauty rises in a different shape, ravishes the soul, and disappears.

Every instant that Loved One assumes a new garment, now of old, now of youth.

Now He plunged into the heart of the substance of

the potter's clay, the Spirit plunged, like a diver.

Now He rose from the depths of mud that is moulded

and baked, then He appeared in the world.

He became Noah, and at His prayer the world was

flooded while He went into the Ark.

He became Abraham and appeared in the midst of

the fire, which turned to roses for His sake.

For a while He was roaming on the earth to pleasure

Himself.

Then He became Jesus and ascended to the dome of

Heaven and began to glorify God.

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In brief, it was He that was coming and going in  
 every generation thou hast seen,  
 Until at last He appeared in the form of an Arab  
 and gained the empire of the world.  
 What is it that is transferred? What is transmigration  
 in reality? The lovely winner of hearts  
 Became a sword and appeared in the hand of 'Alī  
 and became the slayer of the time.  
 No. No. for 'twas even He that was crying in human  
 shape, 'the 'Al-Hagg'.

That one who mounted the scaffold was not Mensur,<sup>1</sup>  
 though the foolish imagined it.

Rumi hath not spoken and will not speak words of  
 infidelity: do not disbelieve him.

Whoever shows disbelief is an infidel and one of  
 those who have been doomed to Hell.<sup>2</sup>

From the experience of the Unity of Being Hallaj is led to  
 believe in the unity of all religions.

تفكرت في الاديان جد تحقق      ما لفيهما اصلا له شجبا جما  
 فلا تطلبن للبر دينافانه      يصدد عن الاصل الوثيق فاني  
 ليما له اصل يجبر عنده      جميع المعالي والمعاني فيضها

I have deeply reflected over all the religions and found them  
 to be one Root with many branches. To not ask a man to adopt a  
 particular religion for (in that case) he will be separated

1. Hallaj is often called Mensur, which is properly the name of  
 his father.

2. Nicholson: Mystics of Islam PP.151,153.



from the firm Root. Verily, it is the Root which seeks the  
 man and elucidates all meanings and grandeurs for his compre-  
<sup>1</sup>  
 hension.

This religious catholicity became a permanent theme of  
 all subsequent oriental mystic poetry. The greatest of all  
 sufi poets Rumi is among its chief exponents:

If there be any lover in the world, O Moslems, 'tis I  
 If there be any believer, infidel, or christian hermit, 'tis I  
 The two and seventy creeds and sects in the world  
 Do not really exist: I swear by God that every creed and sect,  
 'tis 1 2

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1. Diven, Op.cit., P.82. The Bhagavad Gita, the first script-  
 ure to stress the harmony of various pathways to God, states  
 through the lips of Sri Krishna:  
 Whatever path men travel Is my path:  
 No matter where they walk It leads to me.  
 (Clive Johnson, Vedanta, New York, 1971, P.5).

2. Nicholson, Mystics of Islam PP.161-162.

## SHIBLI AND HIS SUCCESSORS

Abu Bakr Tolaf ibn Jehdar al Shibli (247/861 to 334/861) who gave up the administratorship of Damascus before wearing the garb of a sufi was an associate of 'Al Hellej and like him took Junaid as his spiritual guide. Far from being a controversial figure like him he is a saint venerated by all. Even the sceptic Abul 'Ala Ma'rri praises him. His master al Junaid adored him by say, "Every nation has its crown. The crown of this nation (meaning sufis) is Shibli". He said to his pupils, "Do not look at Shibli as you are wont to look at one another because he is one of the eyes of Allah". He enjoys this unanimous respect inspite of the fact that some of his sayings are as audacious as those of al Hellej. He admits having shared al Hellej's beliefs by saying, "I was at one with al Hellej in every matter. My madness saved me while his reason destroyed him. He manifested his thought while I have concealed it". He was thinking of 'Al Hellej when he wrote the following quatrain

Magnoon of 'Amr declared his love while I concealed  
my passion and thus succeeded to attain the state of ecstasy.

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1. Risalatul Ghafren edited by Binti Shati (Egypt) 1950. Page 550. Ma'rri writes, "So far as Abu Bakr Shibli is concerned he was one of those who possess excellence and I believe he was free from the beliefs of incarnation. (Holouliyyah).

2. Al Khatib: Tarikh Baghdad Volume 14 P.395.

3. Massignon: Quatre Textes II No.8.

4. Hilya: Volume 10 page 367. Abu Husein records that at the time of Shibli's visit al Junaid was sitting with his wife when she saw Shibli. She rushed to cover her head. But al Junaid told her not to take that trouble because Shibli was not in his senses.

5. Ma'rri: Gafren Op.cit.P.550.

Only I shall step forward when they call for the lovers on the day of judgment.

Meerri offers his own peculiar criticism of his counterpart. "If it is true that these two verses belong to him (Shibli) no body can check one who objects and says that one who thinks himself to be pure should not say what is not true. His claim to be the only lover to the exclusion of all the creatures of the world cannot be accepted by any man. Whether his love is for the creatures or for the Creator, no one can be sure, he has <sup>1</sup> many like him in nations.

Lik Al Hellej Shibli does not attach much importance to remembrance. Unless ecstacy induced by Dhikr (remembrance) leads to the divine vision (in which he perceives every place permeated with Ultimate Being) his longing for the Infinite is unbearable.

I mentioned Thee, not because I had forgotten Thee even for a moment. The easiest remembrance is that of the tongue.

With ecstacy I was on the point of death due to the excess of longing and my heart was beating in extreme anxiety. When ecstacy showed me that Thou wert present before me I witnessed Thy presence every where.

So I addressed the Existent without having recourse to speech and saw the Known One without seeing Him openly.<sup>2</sup>

Last verse contains an idea which is of great significance both for religion and mysticism. The dialogue

1. Ibid.

2. Doshairi, Risala, op. cit. P. 111

original verses  
not given

between God and the blessed soul is without speech. We have already come across this idea in a poem quoted in our chapter on al Hallaj where he explains this dialogue as "the words without shape and speech"<sup>1</sup>. Shibli is certainly the man who has contributed most towards the propagation of his (al Hallaj's) ideas with the cult of his memory<sup>2</sup>. The idea has been repeated in one of his sayings quoted by Qosheiri: "God (al-Wahid) is known before the (imposition of) limits and words"<sup>3</sup>. It is clearly stated by Shibli that there is no limit of Allah's person (Uhat) and there are no words for his speech<sup>4</sup>. Thus Shibli like al-Hallaj puts a new interpretation on Revelation in the light of his personal experience. In this respect Professor Scholem's observation is very much revealing. "With no thought of denying Revelation as a fact of history", he writes, "the mystic still conceives the source of religious knowledge and experience which bursts forth from his own heart as being of equal importance for the conception of religious truth. In other words, instead of one act of Revelation, there is a constant repetition of this act. This new Revelation, to himself or to his spiritual master, the mystic tries to link up with the sacred texts of old; hence the new interpretation given to the canonical texts and sacred books of the great religions. To the mystic the original act of Revelation to the community, as

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1) Messiaen Divan P.47 third verse.

2) Le Pession P.42.

3) Qosheiri: Risala, P.24.

4) Ibid.



it were, public revelation of Mount Sinai, to take one instance - appears as something whose true meaning has yet to unfold itself; the secret revelation is to him the real and decisive one. And thus the substance of canonical texts, like that of all other religious values, is melted down and given another form as it passes through the fiery stream of mystical consciousness. It is hardly surprising that, hard as the mystic may try to remain within the confines of his religion, he often consciously or unconsciously approaches, or even transgresses, its limits<sup>1</sup>.

Shibli's poetry is not as original and as rich in ideas as that of al-Balla; but he is certainly a better artist.

The afflictions of my heart has consumed my body and my heart has been confused by what has afflicted my body. You may cut down the rope of love which binds you with me if you so wish or you may connect it with me if you like. Everything done by you is lovely.

People know it for certain that I love. But they do not know the object of my desire.<sup>2</sup>

This playful repetition of the words of the first line in the second is an artistic device which even the great mystic poet Hafiz is sometimes tempted to employ to add to the charm of his lyric. Shibli has used this device with a greater skill as Hafiz's repetition is only

1. Gershom G. Scholem: Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, Op.cit. P.9.

2. Tusi: Luna Nicholson's edition (1914) P.253.

3. Hafiz: Divan, rhyme IV

a charming mannerism with no addition of meanings while shibli<sup>1</sup> second line is a furtherance of the meanings of the first line

Though generally known as a mystic of the first rank shibli is primarily a poet. While transforming his spiritual feelings into melody he is equally interested in creating poetry.

A considerable part of his verse is hardly distinguishable from poetry of mundane love. The following short poem<sup>1</sup> could be written by any customary poet:

There is a charm of magic in her glances, she kills and resurrects with them whomever she likes.

she captivates the worlds with her eyes as if they were her slaves.

I observe her so that you may know what is passing in my heart. Look at her and you will know what I mean.

Much of the subsequent mystic poetry employs this symbolism of love. J'afar bin Mohammed Al Khaldi (d 348) writes:-

They call me bereaved and one who does not experience the separation of the loved ones is not bereaved.

Thenights of separation have given me a drink<sup>2</sup> bitterer than the colocynth.

Ahmed bin <sup>ibn</sup> Ata Boodbbadi (d. 367) writes:<sup>3</sup>

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1. Lums: Op.cit., Khawassari: Rodatul Jamat (Tehran 1306 B) P.160.

2. Gulami: Tebaqat: Pedersen (Leiden 1960) P. 459.

3. Bibid P.530.

Neither the Sadi nor the drunkard was weary of the wine of glances, whose cup intoxicates the heart.

The languid and charming eye circulates this wine over the body and its light snatches the heart away.

He says, "O passionate lover. You have exceeded the bounds of love". The beauty of his words puts my love to shame and he adds, "Your intoxication is due to my glance and it is ecstasy through and through and your sobriety is produced by my word which makes it lawful for you to drink".

<sup>1</sup>  
Abul Hasan Ali bin Ibrahim Ali Husri (d. 371) writes:

They said, "By knocking at our door you have troubled us and our sleepless watchmen. What is it that perplexes you in the dark and makes you pay us a nightly visit?" I answered, "Love and hope have produced this excitement".

She said, By God, it is due to my regard for your affliction that you are united. Otherwise your grief could have been a barrier between you and me".

I said, "Nothing but my murder or success can dispel anxiety from my heart."

A gradual development of love symbolism is perceptible in the foregoing selected examples until its climax is reached in the following anonymous quatrain which so **exquisitely** employs the erotic imagery to express the idea of God's immanence in the world:

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1. Ibid P. 520.

لا تفتل دارها بشرقي نجد كل نجد للحامويه دار  
 ولها منزل على كل ما ير وعلى كل دمنة آثار

I cannot say that her abode is in the East of Nejd,  
 Whole of Nejd is an abode for 'Auriyya.  
 Her encampment is near every water pool,  
 And every dunghill bears her impression.<sup>1</sup>

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1. The quatrains has been quoted by Qashani (d. A. H. 730) in his treatise known as Istilahat al-Sufiyyah, Calcutta, 1845, P. 21. 'Auriyya in the second line is the abbreviation of Layla 'Auriyya the famous beloved of the well-known Majnun and she is here a symbol for God.



## THE PHILOSOPHICAL MYSTICS

The mystical sense may be called Philosophical in all those writers who present their conviction in a philosophical form calculated to appeal to the intellect as well as to the emotions. These writers, as a rule, though not always, are themselves markedly intellectual, and their primary concern<sup>1</sup> therefore is with truth or wisdom. Thus Farabi and Ibn Sina are predominately intellectual and have enriched Arabi mystical poetry with their philosophical verse, while Ghazeli and Ibnul Arabi clothe their mystic thought in the language of Philosophy.

Farabi who was Ghisli's contemporary led the life of an ascetic. Ibn Khallikan records that Farabi was the most ascetic of the men in the world. He did not care for earnings or a dwelling. He received only four dirhams from Saifud-Daula,<sup>2</sup> and was contented with this income,<sup>3</sup> while his contemporary, the famous poet Al Moti Nabhi received thousands from the same patron. Farabi solved the philosophical problems in the light of Sufism.<sup>3</sup> Commenting on his Philosophy De Boer writes, "In all likelihood expressions of this kind are only the outer wrapping of a mystico-philosophical belief in the absorption of the Human Spirit into the world, spirit and finally into God. For, as Farabi teaches, although the world, deductively considered (i.e. logically and metaphysically), is something different from God, yet inductively the

1. Spurgeon: Mysticism in English Literature, P. 72.

2. Wafayat Vol. I. P. 77 (Cairo Edition) 1310 H.

3. Abbas Mahmood Maqalat Farabi.

present world is regarded by the soul as being identical with the next, because in everything, even in His Unity, God is Himself the All<sup>1</sup>. This mystic spirit runs throughout Farabi's works and even some technical Sufi terms have been noted in many of his writings. His taste for Sufism is most of all marked in his short treatise *Kitab el Fesus*, where he writes, "No existence (*Wajood*) is more complete than His existence. He is not hidden due to any discrepancy in His existence, but because of the intensity of His manifestation<sup>2</sup>. God is the ultimate cause and ground of everything and the Universe<sup>3</sup> emanated from Him. The only true existence is spirit, although it assumes various degrees. God alone is entirely unmixed and pure spirit, while those spirits, which eternally proceed from Him, already have in them the element of plurality. The farther any one of them is removed from the first, so much the less part has it in the Being of the pure spirit. There is no gap in all the system; the Universe is a beautiful and well ordered whole. The longing of the soul is directed to what is above; and advancing knowledge purifies and leads it upward<sup>3</sup>.

O the Cause of all things . O one whose flowing bounty is their cause.

O the Lord of graded heavens and centre . In their midst are the earth and the seas.

1. The History of Philosophy in Islam, P.124.

2. Kitab el Fesus: Hyderabad(Dacca) India 1345 A.H.P.20.

3. De Boer, Op.cit. PP 124,125.

I have called Thee for protection after committing sins.  
 Forgive the errors of the sinful and down trodden.  
 Lord of all . Purify me from the dross of nature and elements  
 with Thy bounty.<sup>1</sup>

"God is the Reality (Haq) from the point of view of existence. He is real because Unreal has nothing to do with Him. When we say that He is Real, it is because He is the necessary one with whom the unreal cannot mix. The existence of everything unreal (Batil) is necessitated by Him.<sup>2</sup> He stresses the unreality of everything other than God in this short piece.<sup>2x</sup>

Brother, leave the place of Unreality and take store of the realities.

This abode of ours is not eternal, nor is the man performing any miracle on this earth.

We are as unreal as the lines drawn on a globe.

Circumference of heavens is a more befitting place for us.

How long shall we collide with one another on the centre (of the earth).<sup>3</sup>

Ferehi's concern with mysticism was far deeper than what it is commonly believed to be. He seems to have experienced the the highest mystic state of Fana through purely intellectual process as his following verses indicate.

1. Im Abi Oseyhi, Op.cit. P.606.

2. Kitab el Fusus, Op.cit.P.22.

3. Im Abi Oseyhi, Op.cit.P. 607.

With a single glance I saw in the light of knowledge,  
And I was obliterated to all existents and my doubts were  
dispelled.

My heart continued to take refuge in Thy Beauty and Presence  
Till the self was annihilated in Thee.

My night was turned into day and my darkness was changed  
into lustre,

And the sun of Thy Beauty appeared<sup>1</sup>.

Thus A.N. Whitehead gives us only a modern version of Farabi's  
views when he remarks: "Philosophy is mystical. For mysticism  
is direct insight into ~~xxxxxx~~ depth as yet unspoken. But  
the purpose of Philosophy is to rationalise mysticism; not  
by ~~explaining~~ explaining away, but by the introduction of  
novel verbal characterizations, rationally coordinated<sup>2</sup>."  
Ibn Sina

Ibn Sina's (d 428 A.H.) concern with mysticism is  
evident from his mystical treatises and last two chapters<sup>3</sup>  
of his Isharat captioned "Stations of gnostics" and the  
"mysteries of signs"<sup>4</sup>. Whereas Farabi was mainly interested  
in pure Reason and loved thinking for its own sake, Ibn  
Sina is very much concerned about the Soul. His theory of  
human nature is dualistic. Body and soul have no essential  
connection with one another. All bodies are produced, under

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1. Ma'soom Ghirezi: Tarjima-e-Haqiqat (Tehran) Vol. I. P. 384.

2. A.N. Whitehead: Modes of Thought, 1938, P. 237.

3. A.P. Von Mehren, Traites Mystiques d'Avicenne (Leiden  
1889).

4. Isharat o Tanbihat: Ed. Gulestan Dunya, Vol. III PP. 226-56.



the influence of the stars, from the mingling of the elements; and in this way human body is also produced, but from a combination in which the finest proportion is observed. A spontaneous generation of the body, just like the extinction and restoration of the human race, is therefore possible. The soul, however, is not to be explained from such mixtures of the elements. It is not the inseparable form of the body, but is accidental to it. From the Giver of Forms, that is - from the Active Spirit over us, every Body receives its own soul, which is <sup>adopted</sup> ~~attributed~~ to it and to it alone<sup>1</sup>. "Although following the peripatetics in his classification of the faculties of the soul, Avicenna differs from them in his insistence upon the immortality of the individual soul, its incorruptible and immaterial substance, and that the fact that it is in a degraded state while in the prison of senses. In his "esoteric philosophy", as well as in some of his beautiful poems, he writes over and over again of the original celestial abode of the soul and the necessity to remember once again its heavenly dwelling place. In these works he ceases to be a Peripatetic philosopher theoretically interested in the faculties of the soul and becomes like the Platonists and the later Illuminationists, a spiritual doctor who seeks to cure the disease of forgetfulness and negligence that has befallen the soul and to save it from its pitiful terrestrial state"<sup>2</sup>.

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1. De Boer: The History of Philosophy in Islam pp.139-40.

2. Hossein Nasr: Three Gages (1964) P.40.

Having accepted that soul was the very antithesis of the body he attaches it a destiny far above the corporeal body with which it is yoked by the providence for some divine purpose. He expresses this soul and body relation and the first and the last abode of the soul in the most powerful style. Nowhere Avicenna's ideas about soul are better expressed than in the following ode on the human soul which ranks among the sublimest composed in any language.

It has descended upon thee from out of the regions above,  
That exalted, ineffable, glorious, heavenly tone  
It was concealed from the eyes of all those who its nature  
would ken,

Yet it wears not a veil and is ever apparent to men.  
Unwilling it sought thee and joined thee, and yet though  
grieve,

It is like to be still more unwilling thy body to leave.  
It resisted and struggled, and would not be tamed in haste  
Yet it joined thee, and slowly grew used to this desolate  
waste,

Till forgotten at length, as I ween, were its haunts and  
its troth.

In the heavenly gardens and groves, which to leave it  
loath.

Until, when it entered the D of its ~~remains~~ downward  
Descent,

and to earth, to the G of its centre, unwillingly went,  
The eye of Infinity smote it, and lo, it was hurled.

Midst the sign-posts and ruined abodes of this desolate world  
 It weeps when it thinks of its home and the peace it possess<sup>ed</sup>  
 with tears welling forth from its eyes without pausing or  
 rest.

and with plaintive mourning it broodeth like one bereft  
 Over such trace of its home as the foul fold winds have left  
 Thick nets detain it, and strong is the cage whereby  
 It is held from seeking the lofty and spacious sky.  
 Until the hour of home ward flight draws near,  
 And 'tis time for it to return to its empler sphere,  
 It carols with joy, for the veil is raised it spies  
 such things as cannot be witnessed by waking eyes.  
 On a lofty height it doth warble its songs of praise  
 (For even the lowliest thing doth knowledge raise).  
 And so it returneth aware of all hidden things.  
 In the Universe while no stain to its garment clings.  
 Now why from its perch on high was it cast like this  
 To the lowest Nadir's gloomy and deep abyss?  
 Was it God who cast it forth for some purpose wise,  
 Concealed from the keenest seeker's inquiring eyes?  
 Then is its descent a discipline wise but stern,  
 That the things that it hath not heard it may thus learn,  
 so 'tis she whom Fate doth plunder, until her star  
 setteth at length in a place from its rising far,  
 Like a gleam of lightning which over meadows shone,  
 And, as though it never had been, in a moment is gone.

1. *Al-Qasidah Bayyina: Chirf 1318 A.H.*; *Imam As-Sayyid*  
 Tabagat (Beirut) P. 446; It is quoted in many works  
 such as *Wafayat*. This poem has been commented upon by  
 many later writers like Usod, al-Antaki, Sharif Jurjani.

This ode affords us to peep into the very depth of Ibn Sina's being — his flesh at violent war with his spirit his nostalgic inclination to the mystical life which is particularly marked in his mystical epistles. It is interesting to note this sense of antimony between soul and body as a poetic parallel in the English metaphysical poet John Donne who like Ibn Sina cannot brook the hinderance of the bodies standing between two souls.

But O alas, so long, so farre  
 Our bodies why doe we forebear?  
 They are ours, though they are not wee, wee are  
 The intelligences, they the spheres.  
 We owe them thanks, because they thus,  
 Did us, to us, at first convey,  
 Yeeled their forces, sense, to us,  
 Nor are drosse to us, but elley.  
 On men heavens influence workes not so,  
 But that it first imprints the ayre,  
 Soe soule into the soule may flow,  
 Though it to body first repaire.  
 As our blood labours to beget  
 Spirits, as like soules as it can,  
 Because such figures need to knit.  
 That subtile knot, which makes us men:  
 So must pure lovers soules descend  
 To affections, and to faculties,  
 Which sense may reach and apprehend,  
 Else a great Prince in prison lies.



It is not by sheer chance that these two poems share characteristics common to both of them as hinted above. Both Ibn Sina and Donne have drawn upon the same sources. Plato, Neoplatonists and Plotinus have influenced them. Not only the ideas but some of the phrases of eighth tractate of Plotinus' *Ennead* have been used by Donne. Soul's descent is the very caption of this tractate. Ibn Sina draws upon Plotinus more amply and the fourth *Ennead* seems to have served him as the raw material for his poem. This becomes all the more obvious when Plotinus while asking himself "how it happens that he can now be descending, and how did the soul ever enter in his body, the soul which even within the body, is the high thing it has shown itself to be examines the theories of earlier philosophers, Heraclitus, Empedocles and Pythagoras and disregarde them remarking, "We have to fall back on the illustrious Plato, who uttered many noble sayings about the soul. What do we learn from this Philosopher? We will not find him so consistent throughout that it is easy to discover his mind. Everywhere, no doubt, he expresses contempt for all that is of sense, blames the commerce of soul with body as an enchainment, an entombment, and upholds as a great truth the sayings of mysteries that the soul is here a prisoner. In the cavern of Plato and in the cave of Empedocles, I discern this Universe, where the breaking of the fetters and the ascent from the depth are figures of the wayfaring towards the Intellectual Realm.

In the *Phaedrus* he makes a falling of the wings the cause of the entry to this realm; and there are periods of

which send back the soul after it has risen; there are judgements and lots and fates and necessities driving other souls down to this order. In all these explanations he finds guilt in the arrival of the soul at body. But, treating, in the *Timaeus*, of our Universe he exalts the Cosmos and entitles it a Blessed God, and holds that the soul was given by the goodness of the Creator to the end that the total of things might be possessed of intellect, for thus intellectual it was planned to be, and thus it cannot be except through Soul. There is reason then why the Soul of All should be sent into it from God: in the same way the Soul of each single one of us is sent that the Universe may be complete; it was necessary that all beings of the Intellectual should be tallied by just so many forms of living creatures here in the realm of sense<sup>1</sup>, writes Plotinus.

Besides this Ode the other epoch-making verse of the period is the following short poem by Khawaja Abdullah Ansari (396-481 B/1006-1089 ) the author of the well known Sufi manual *Manzil al-Gairan* which ends with this thorough<sup>2</sup> ly pantheistic and controversial poetic fragment<sup>3</sup>.

The oneness of the Unique One has never been declared (properly) by any one,  
since anyone who declares His oneness is one who denies (His true oneness).

1. The *Enneads* (translated by Stephen Mackenna) PP. 357-358.

2. *Manzil al-Gairan* (Cairo, 1327/1909) P. 52.

3. Eighteen Commentaries of the Book by different writers spotkx spotlight the influence it wielded.

Declaration of the divine oneness by a person who speaks  
about His attributes,

Is a "Lawn"<sup>1</sup>, which the Unique One has nullified.

His (own) declaration of His (own) oneness is the (true)  
declaration of His oneness.

And to describe Him with attributes is deviation.<sup>2</sup>

Ansari has repeated this idea in another Arabic quatrain.<sup>3</sup>

And there is yet another quatraine which voices pantheistic  
thinking.<sup>4</sup>

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1. It is a lawn and not his property but God's property.  
God's true oneness, not recognised by the person who  
speaks about His attributes, nullifies and cancels this  
lawn. This is the explanation of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah:  
Tatthniyah, which was Ibn al-Zayyat's reading, is a simple  
fiction.
  2. See Ibn Khaldun: Al-Muqaddimah (Chapter on Tasawuf) Beirut  
(1961) PP. 877-878. He quotes and discusses this poem and  
puts Tatthniyah in place of Arya in the fourth line.  
Cf. Ibn Arabi, Futuhat, IV, 473: "Whoever declares the one-  
ness of God is a deviator (heretic), because of the 'who-  
ever' that requires numerical plurality."
  3. See De Laguerre De Beaurecueil: Khawass 'Abdullah Ansari  
Beirut, 1965, P. 306.
  4. Ibid, P. 305.

GH A Z A L I

Ghazali, the most illustrious of the philosophical mystics, commonly called the Proof of Islam (Hujjat al Islam) for his unparalleled services to the cause of Muslim Theology, has left behind a considerable number of poems some of which are manifestly mystical while others seem to be inspired by profane love such as the following quatrain :

قلت عفت صدغتي خده فراجل بجاع من السيرة  
ولقد سودنا به كل سرجه من الحيات كيف حلت فيه

The curls about his temples, to the moon of his cheeks,  
have fall'n,

In loveliness so radiant, that none with him can compare.

In the sign of the Scorpion, we have often seen the moon,

To see the Scorpion in the moon, that is a thing more rare<sup>1</sup>.

But these lines may be interpreted mystically, for the locks of the beloved, in the poetry of the Sufis, represent One veiled by the Many, and her moon-like cheek the Divine Essence made manifest by its attributes.

The following verses composed by him in the days when he was travelling and living a life of solitude after his conversion to the creed of Sufism, expressed what his conversion meant to him :

وجدت عبدًا راقصًا بالهوى ماكني فصرحت حراً راقصًا بالهوى  
وجدت بالوحدة سنانا من شر اصناف بني آدم الخ

1. Ibn Khalliqan : Wafayat Vol.I, page 464;

Subki, Tab., IV, page 115.



Once I had been a slave : Lust was my master,  
Lust then became my servant : I was free.  
Leaving the haunts of men, I sought Thy Presence,  
Lovely, I found in Thee my company.  
Not in the market-place is found the treasure  
Nor is learned like the ignorant, who know not thee,  
Who taunt me, thinking that my search is folly,  
On my ring is engraved my apology!

Subki quotes the following lines among his verses on love to God :

Though love afflict me, yet it is not grievous,  
For death to self, means life in Thee my Lover,  
To suffer thirst, if that shall be Thy pleasure,  
To me, is sweeter far, than all refreshment.  
Nothing can grieve me now, save what divides me  
From Thee — but with Thee, nought has power to harm me<sup>2</sup>.

Of all his poetry scattered in his prose works and recorded by biographers two odes (Qasidas) deserve special attention. One of these is named Qasidas al Haiya (due to its rhyme ending in letter Ha) and the other al Taiya (with its rhyme ending in the letter ta). The Haiya is a poem of self-reproach which begins :

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1. Murtada Zabidi, Ithaf, P.24;

According to Zabidi, the inscription on Ghazali's ring ran thus : they do not keep their words. We found them to be wrong doers.

2. Subki, Tab., IV page 115.

What is wrong with my Self that it prolongs its complaints  
before the people although it has anchored its hopes with Allah<sup>1</sup>.

In the first twenty-nine verses of the poem Ghazali describes  
all the vices of his soul wishing it to entrust its affairs to  
Allah so that it may be saved by Him. In the subsequent verses he  
compares his Selfhood with that of a mystic :

What a difference there is between myself and the mystic who  
purifies himself with piety<sup>2</sup> :-

His soul is unlike my sinful soul whom I order and restrain  
with great struggle.

My soul disobey<sup>3</sup>s its Lord.

Woe to me for what it has done!  
and Woe it, for the same!

He wonders how his soul can turn to God because it turns a  
deaf ear to all admonition as if he were addressing some one else.  
Had it known the purpose of its creation it would have wept out of  
remorse but its ignorance of its Lord has led it astray from the  
path of truth. He gives this touching picture of his struggle with it :

صرت مع النفس في محاربة ..... تاملني بالهوى وانشاها  
..... محن كقرين في محاركة ..... ادبر عني البصير عند لقاءها

1. Ghazali : Ma'aribal quds fi Mad'ariji Ma'rifat al Hafs  
(Egypt, 1927) Page : 213

2. Ibid page : 214.

3. Ibid page : 215.

وہی مجھ کو سہارے کی راہی صبر بپریق پہنچا رہا  
ان جہت بالقتال شجہا اور ضحمت فی اللقا، قواہا  
اصرعہا تارۃ و تقرعی لکن لہا السبق بین القاہا

I have become at enmity with myself  
For it bids me to sin and I seek to restrain it  
We are two antagonists, warring one with other,  
Patiently I strive to overcome the flesh.  
With the troops of lust, it takes the field against me.  
What can patience do to stand its onslaughts?  
If it shows cowardice in the strife, the troops enbolden it  
Or if it grows faint in the fight they strengthen it.  
Some times I throw it down, and sometimes it throws me down.  
But in the encounter it has the upper hand<sup>1</sup>.

These verses recall St. Paul's spiritual struggles contained in the following lines of New Testament :

I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not :  
for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I...  
..... but I see another law in my members, warring against  
the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law  
of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am ! who  
shall deliver me from the body of this death<sup>2</sup>?

1. Ibid 215

2. Romans VII 14-25.

The parallel states of mind shared by two mystics belonging to different cultures and times shows the universality of mystical experiences.

The poem (which consists of sixty-four verses) ends with the note of prayer :

O My Lord, make it repent soon,  
And bathe its misdeeds with the water of purity,  
O Sire, if Thou art its torturer,  
To Whom shall it look for mercy?  
Have mercy upon me, O Lord, and forgive me  
For Thou didst create me and Thou art my Lord<sup>1</sup>.

His most important mystical poem is Taiyya which contains the gist of his teachings and hints at divine mysteries. Here he abandons his usual restraint and seems to be swept away with divine love and ecstasy. The ode gives us an insight into the personality and mind of Ghazali. It is pretty long (consisting of about four hundred verses) and begins thus :

بنور تجلی وجه قدس دست دوستی و فیاض گل ان لا خفاء بل خبری

My bewilderment is due to the flashing light of Thy Holy face  
Thou art the cause of my astonishment, as it is not hidden<sup>2</sup>  
from Thee .

Here Ghazali has described two faces of the same mystic experience. According to the Sufi terminology Dahshat (bewilderment)

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1. Ghazali, Ma'arrijal quds fi Madariji Ma'rfat al Hafs Page:216  
The book includes his Haiyya and Taiyya. It is published  
in Egypt (1927) by Matba'ah As Sa'adah.

2. Ibid, Page : 216.



belongs to the external (Zahir) while astonishment (Hayrat) belongs to internal (Batin) phenomena. Ghazali's reaction to the grace of divine light shows the quality of his mysticism. It is a mysticism of divine knowledge rather than of love although this knowledge has been gained through love as Ghazali writes in Ihya<sup>1</sup> that love of Allah is the ultimate aim of mysticism and there is no station in Sufi path after it which is not dependent upon it. Ghazali put on the garb of a sufi in order to gain a certain knowledge<sup>2</sup>. The next very verses of this ode also supports this view :

فيا اقرب الاشياء من كل نظرة لا بعد شيء انت عن كل روية  
 ظهرت فلما ان صرت تجليا بطننت بطونا كاد لفضي بردني

Thou who art (really) nearer than any glance, for the sense of sight,

Thou art the farthest object.

Thou appeared and when Thou dazzled (others) with Thine light

Thou wert hidden in a manner that I was very near rejecting the very notion of Thy presence .

Ghazali is a seeker of truth and wants a knowledge which leaves no room for doubt. This verse and the four verses which follow it are autobiographical and hint at the mental torture and spiritual struggle which Ghazali had to suffer in search of the knowledge of Divinity :

ما وجدت بين العقل والحق عندما خضيت خلافا لا يزال بصلية

1. Ihya Vol. IV page 252;

2. Munqidh (Lahore, published by the Department of Auqaf, Punjab Government 1971) Page 8;

3. Maarijal Quds, page 216;

إذا ما ادعى عقل وجودك منكراً على الحس ما ينفيه قال له أثبت

وذلك أن الحس ينفيك صورة ويرى! عقل منك بحجة

من ههنا منشأ الخلاف يصيب الوقائع بخلاف في اقتضاء الجبلية

So when Thou wert hidden due to the intensity of Thine light  
Thou caused disharmony between the intellect and the senses.  
When the intellect claimed to prove Thy existence disapproving  
what the senses denied it said to senses,  
"I prove".

It is because the senses deny to have seen thy form but  
intellect is pleased to advance arguments about Thy existence.  
Thus started the discord and it became difficult to  
harmonise the different claims of human nature<sup>1</sup>.

Now all this is a poetic re-statement of what he has written  
in detail in his Munqidh<sup>2</sup>.

This state of uncertainty and discord soon passes and we  
hear the voice of enlightened mystic in the following verses :

وإن قلت لم أبصر في كل صورة أراها أحييت ذاب بين بصيرتي

1. Ma'arij, Page 216.

2. See his discussion of senses and intellect as sources  
of knowledge in Munqidh (Lahore Edition) Pages 6-8.

تجلیات ان قلت انی بصرک انکرت (119) - شغالی ولم تشهد بذات مقالتی

تجلیات من فی حق ظہرت لی حقیقت خفا. درین کل فکر

علی انه لم یبق لی جبل برای تجلیات لی الا ردک بصره

نا جیتی فی السر من فاصدت وقد طوبت عما سواک طوبتی

دما فی فصل ملک بخطر فیه لی سواک فوقی قیام غیر موقت

If I say that I did not see Thee in every form which I had seen, my statement will be contrary to my insight.

And if I say that I see Thee, my statement will be wrong as my eye does not bear testimony to it.

Thy light shined within me<sup>1</sup> so that Thou became manifest for me although Thou wert hidden to all speculation.

With this difference (between Moses and Ghazali) that no mountain remained for me that saw Thy light as it was torn to pieces due to the shock.

Thou whispered in my inner most being so that I was cut off from everything except Thee.

There is no room for anything other than Thee in my mind.

My time with Thee is unmeasured<sup>2</sup>.

1. This refers to Ghazali's favourite Theme of the knowledge of self. It is hinted at in the Quranic verse :

"

"

2. Ma'ariful quds page 216.

The divine grace of illumination depends on the receptibility of the human soul and so Ghazali concentrates on the conditions, the soul must fulfil in order to be able to receive divine benediction. The happiness of the soul and the culmination of its essence consist in its entirely turning towards God and disregarding the senses and in being always strung in the string of holiness so that the divine light shines in its inmost being ..... Yielding to the call of flesh repels the divine lights<sup>1</sup>. Addressing an imaginary listener (or disciple) he recites :

Thy soul is a trust of the Active<sup>2</sup> Intellect,  
to return the trust is one of the things incumbent  
on intelligence.

And return it only when it has completed the attainment of all possible accomplishments which are worthy of it. When it is purified from the dross of nature it will be transparent in essence and will shine forth<sup>3</sup>.

Neoplatonic influences are obvious in the above verses as we have noticed them in Ibn Sina's Ode on the soul. Ghazali seems to convey that soul is on trial in this world while in the bondage of flesh and its earthly sojourn is meant to bring its qualities to perfection and he advises the imaginary disciple to look after it properly and to curb the carnal desires :

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1. Ma'ariful Quds Page : 79.

2. Ma'ariful Quds Page : 136.

3. Ibid Page 217.



Oppose its lustful nature, as far as you can, because lust is its enemy and wishes it all evils<sup>1</sup>.

He insists on the purification of the soul which is the only receptacle of the divine light :

Through it I saw the divine light shining behind the curtains of delicate things.

I ascertained the matters about which I had my doubts and saw what was a hidden secret.

Thus he came to know the meanings of his origin, life, death and his final exit from the stage of life because all realities of the Universe were mirrored in his soul. He was left with no doubtful proposition which created doubts among the people concerning many things and his soul rested in peace :-<sup>2</sup>

The soul threw down its staff and I was sure that my travelling for paturage was to end<sup>3</sup>.

Next he tells how this divine knowledge is mirrored in the soul :

What I have said is indicated by the state of drowsiness when the senses are lulled by sleep. (In this condition) the Unseen Tablet comes in front of the soul just as a mirror is paralleled by another polished mirror. What is written on the Divine Tablet is reflected (lit. printed) in the soul as if the Unseen is a copy of my soul.

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1. Maarjul Quds page : 217.

2. Maarjul Quds pages 217-218 paraphrase of four verses

3. Ibid Page 218.

If isolation (disengagement from all worldly things) were possible in wakefulness you could have witnesses all such wonderful happenings<sup>1</sup>.

Next he tells us how he has attained gnosis by learning and practising the science of Sufism :

My soul did not attain to spiritual heights without learning superior sciences and gaining the distinctions gained.

Sometimes the vessel is full and there is no room in it for even a drop of water. When my longings had brought me to this state of fulness Thou made me forget myself by means of trial and estranged me to my self with the intimacy of Thy love.

Thou served me with the wine of Thy love and the intoxication will last till the day of my resurrection.

My intoxication obliterated and established me at the same time. What a wonder! The thing which negates my existence affirms it as well.

Then Thou brought me near Thyself and I was completely connected with Thee.

And thou took a pledge from me that I would be a secret gospel which is better closed. (lit, its closure is its circulation).

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1. Ibid page 218.

Then Thou disclosed my secret to me through me  
and I became eloquent and my speech was flawless.  
Thou made me to understand that the world of  
senses was not a befitting place for me.  
I concealed what I had come to know because  
only the chosen one can appreciate it<sup>1</sup>.

While expressing his mystical experiences Ghazali gradually becomes didactic. He is at pains to point out that these divine gestures were meant for the guidance of the mankind but darkness of ignorance still prevails. He wishes us to know the importance of the world of intellect ('alam al 'Aql) and deplores that our senses have exiled us from our native land. Platonic influence is so dominant upon him that he thinks that birth is not a matter of pleasure and the people should be sorry when any body is born because a soul has been driven out from the abode of bliss. Weeping over the dead is ignorance. It is our duty to the deceased to show joy over his demise because he has been freed from the human bondage to return to his native place.

They do not know that birth is emigration from one's native country. The newly born has been allowed to forsake the best of all places to live in a state of captivity. His death is a joyful return to his family and the original home.

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1. Ma'ariful Quds page 219.

At this point Ghazali's mysticism is dominated by his priesthood and he condemns the idol worshippers as any fanatic monotheist would do. After a bit of self criticism he resumes lovers' tone and tells God that his love for Him is boundless. It has increased his decay and his patience is unable to lessen the sting of trials which have emaciated his body. Ghazali, the philosopher and theologian used to restraint is swept away by his emotions. He thinks his expression to be "shath", a mystic term which literally means over flowing, running away or roving. In this state sufis utter words which are forbidden by the religions.

Do not blame me for the extravagance of my expression  
The wildness of my speech is small as compared to my  
intoxication<sup>1</sup>.

After this preliminary apology he continues to give  
vent to his feelings and sings of his love and the unique  
quality of his passion.

Don't mind if I sing out of joy for Thee. Even  
the mountains would have burst into song, if  
they had been under the spell of ecstasy like me<sup>2</sup>.

'The love experienced by famous lovers like qays  
of layla and Kosayyar is nothing as compared  
to his passion<sup>3</sup>.

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1. 1, 2 and 3. Ibid Page : 221.



Their intoxication depends upon a few dregs left by Ghazali :

Others drank the remnants of my cup. So the intoxication of those who take what I leave as useless cannot be compared to my intoxication<sup>1</sup>.

Ghazali is really intoxicated. He gives free reign to his thoughts and abandons all reserve and reaches the climax and proclaims in his verse which he dare not write in his prose works.

بگو زانی عن صفاتی را انما یخمر عینی انی ذات وحده  
و حل اما الالات ذاتا و رجدة و حل اب الالاسی حیاتی

My tongue is unable to describe my attributes. What I say can be interpreted to mean that I am the One.

I am nothing but Thee, whether it be thy person or Unity. And Thou art nothing but the very essence of my selfhood.

This means to be pure monism and one is reminded of what Ghazali wrote else-where that there is no God but God was a definition only fit for popular consumption, whereas the privileged held the formula, there is no He but He<sup>2</sup>. He appears to believe that the soul in its total

1. Ibid page 221.

2. Ghazali : Fadail ul Anam (Tehran) Page 15.

denudation of all qualities is identical with God.

However, in a bid to remain in conformity with the beliefs of the community he explained away this mystic truth in an orthodox manner in his Mishkat ul and Ihya ul Uloom where condemning the exaggerations of sufis he writes, "When Allah's light has shined on the heart of a saint he is bewildered ( بهره شده ) by the excess of beauty. Sometimes his tongue takes a lead in this state of bewilderment and he says that he is the Reality (Anal Haq) ..... He has been deceived x by a small portion (star) of the lights of God. This is a stage of deception because the thing mirrored resembles the mirror as the colour mirrored in the mirror is apt to be taken for ~~that~~ of the mirror as what is in the glass is apt to be taken for the glass as the poet says :

The glass was transparent and so was the wine  
They resembled each other so much that the matter  
became serious. As if there was the wine only  
and no bowl was there."

After singing of his relation with the divine reality he resumes the theme of the high destiny of the soul which rules the body like a king and the success of its mission on the earth depends upon its proving to be a good governor of the body, because it is only by managing it nicely that it can return nicely to the higher world where it will see what no eye has seen and no ear has ever heard of. But this ideal remains unrealized. Ghazali says that he has preferred his carnal pleasures and objects

of desires over this noble aim and followed the wishes of his lower self. By doing this he has blocked the souls' path leading it to the upper world and made it a captive at a place where nobody shows any pity for it. Neither repentance nor sorrow is of any avail. Ghazali is sorry for the miserable plight of the soul. He thinks that ignorance is the cause of its misfortunes so he praises knowledge and condemns ignorance and again dwells upon the pleasures of souls' return and its grief in this world where it is doomed to be separated from its family and neighbours. He complains of the disregard of the people who do not praise his good actions because they are the slaves of their lust which has brought thousands of curses upon them. But his departure brings sorrow to people because he is the goal of his Lords' creation and all things are created to serve him, and God commanded his angels to bow before him. So he advises his disciple to prefer his company to any one else as it is only when the curtains hanging between them are lifted that he will be able to see the beautiful faces and Ghazali's happiness.

After this brief advice Ghazali again turns towards God expressing his love for him. It is not for the first time that he has experienced the passion of divine love. He had gone away long before to seek God leaving his family :

I left my native place, my family and my neighbours,  
so that Thou should know that I can stake my life  
for thy sake<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Ma'riful Quds, Page 225.

He is repeating here what he has already written in detail in his *Munqidh*.

In the verses that follow he dwells upon his insignificance and his dependance on God and seeks His pleasure and grace.

I am but a tree planted by Thee

If it does not receive rain from Thee it will run dry<sup>1</sup>.

Ghazali tells us that God has dispelled the darkness for him and granted him wisdom and knowledge. He stresses upon self-knowledge because ignorance is death and the soul ascends to the higher regions on the strength of intellect. He is grateful to that (soul) which is veiled in him although it is more manifest than the sun. He enters into an amorous dialogue with it and concludes with his revealing remarks about the nature of prophecy :

وما الرحي الا حجاب أنس قربة ملائكي احدا على العقل غطت  
وان لما نحو المحيط بدانتها على عالم العقل الذي عنه شئت  
وامرات ما بقى الباطنات من اشارات رموز الحقول حقيقة  
وامام افهام النفوس لما في الهادي التي في ذاتها قد تهيئت

The prophetic revelation is nothing but a mighty soul's putting off the robes of senses which cover the

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1. Ibid, page 225.



intellect. How it (mighty soul) ascends towards One Who encompasses it, taking its stand on the world of intellect from where it shoots forth. It (revelation) is comprehension of the symbols too subtle to be understood by an ordinary intelligence. Moreover its mission is to bring to the understanding of others such delicate meanings which it has discovered within its inner self<sup>1</sup>.

After giving this brief but illuminating explanation of the nature of revelation he proceeds to expound a theory on the effect of music on the soul. Here too he seems to be under Plato's influence, when he writes that souls respond to music here, in this life, because they are reminded of melodies heard long since, before they were invested with their bodies, when they listened to the sweet melody of spheres<sup>2</sup>.

Nothing moves the souls when they listen to music but the melodies heard long before.

"So, by some earthly melody the soul is reminded of the time of its pre existence, when it dwelt in the heavenly spheres and longs to be reunited with the source. It endeavours to isolate itself from the mortal world to flee towards its immortal home. But the body pulls it and it also pulls the body and ultimately it moves and dances. How can it remain unmoved by the music of spheres when even

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1. Ibid, P. 228.

2. Ma'ariful Quds page 228.

the sound of water wheel is enough to agitate a sensitive mind? The weeping baby in the cradle is soothed by a song and lies at peace. How could thus the soul enjoy music here if it was not reminded of the celestial melodies which rejoiced it in the heavenly realms. Even the dumb beast of burden is sometimes agitated by the song. When the camel is weary of journeying in the desert it is inspired by the voice of the driver and moves quickly and lends its ear to the tunes of the singer. The bird is charmed by the notes of a string. This universal response to music is caused by the singing spheres<sup>1</sup>".

These repeated references to the music of the spheres show that for Ghazali it has a cosmic significance and it seems to be a part of his belief that they do actually sing as Shakespeare would have us believe that --

"There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest,  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins  
Such harmony is in the immortal souls  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it..."<sup>2</sup>.

The next twenty two verses portray the ingenuity and the skill of the humblest creatures as like insects, bees

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1. Ibid pages 228-299.

2. <sup>The</sup> Merchant of Venice, Act V, Scene I, 63-68.

and spiders, stressing at the same time that everything in the universe serves a divine purpose and even the inanimate things mention his glory. "When the sun stops in the midst of the sky at the time of Zuhr (noon) it offers its mid-day prayer to God and at the time of its decline it offers one Rak'at and completes its prayer by prostrating before God when it is about to set. In the similar manner all the spheres of the universe worship God in their various orbits<sup>1</sup>".

Ghazali resumes the theme of the intoxication of his love which does not admit of any interval of sobriety. Every beautiful object increases his wonder at the divine beauty and his heart fears nothing but his separation from his beloved. Even his submission to God's will is motivated by his hope of divine union.

When a heavenly aroma brings him tidings, every hair of his body is poised to listen to it and his soul feels the pleasure of the wine of love glowing gently in his veins. No drunkard has experienced this sensation as the heaviness caused by wine stands in no comparison with the joys of love. When he is lost to himself he is present before God, who is according to him the interior of every manifest thing. He finds himself circumscribed by God who is the central point of his being and asks "Am I not a part of Thee?". When he turns his face for prayer, his soul becomes his Ka'bah. His

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fasting, piety, obedience, ritual sacrifice, praises, pilgrimage and 'Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) are in reality for his own sake<sup>1</sup>.

روحانی طرائق راجح و خلالات است  
 تلاوی امریکی من سنا سبک تجی  
 و ذکر ری و سبکی و حمدی و فریبی  
 نفسی و روحی و جسمی و معنوی

It is obligatory for me to turn round me as the pilgrims turn round the Ka'bah and Kissing myself (instead of the black stone) is among the ceremonies of my pilgrimage. My dhikr, mention, praise, spiritual purity, glorification and nearness are meant for my own soul (self).

After making such monistic pronouncements he resumes the theme of souls' yearning for its original home.

The soul remains in the fire of sorrow caused by distance from its origin and suffers due to the tightened fetters of troubles.

It vacillates between the world of flesh and that of intellect and both are lost to it.

So it begins to yearn for the world of intellect, where its entry is barred<sup>2</sup>.

The lines remind of Ibn Sina's ode on soul. The whole poem seems to be inspired by Avicenna's famous 'Aniyh' and

1. Ma'ariful Quds page 231.

These verses are obviously pantheistic.

2. Ibid, P.232.



may aptly be regarded its enlargement. While Ibn Sina is throughout philosophical and artistic Ghazali lapses into didacticism; and ends the poem on the same note with the exception of a few inspired passages al Ghazali is somewhat prosaic. He rarely uses the symbolic techniques of the earlier sufis or like his contemporary Shahrastori whom we propose to study next.

SHAHRAZORI:

"The true Mysticism", says R.L. Nettleship, "is the belief that everything, in being what it is, is symbolic of something more"<sup>1</sup>. All Nature is the language in which God expresses His thoughts; but the thoughts are far more than the language. Thus it is that the invisible things of God from the creation of the world may be clearly seen and understood from the things that are made<sup>2</sup>. "That is true symbolism", says Goethe, "where the more particular represents the more general, not as a dream or shade, but as a vivid, instantaneous revelation of the inscrutable"<sup>3</sup>. Thus the early sufis sang of things divine while using the imagery of mundane love poetry. They attempted to convey a super-natural experience in the language of visible things, and therefore almost every word was a symbol which evoked the associations of a reality beyond the senses. They tried to create a visible image of an invisible world, as Mallarme' (the French symbolist poet) tried to capture in verse an ideal beauty.

Thus Sufism developed its own vocabulary which seems to be firmly established by the fourth century of Hegira and even the great poet Motanabbi (d. 354) was sometimes tempted to use it<sup>4</sup>, and Tha'alibi justly accuses him of borrowing

1. R.L. Nettleship, Remains

2. W.R. Inge, Christian Mysticism, op. cit. p.250.

3. Goethe quoted in Ibid p.251.

4. For example :

انیکم فن حسی بخیر نی من  
بما شربت مشرودة الروح من ذوقی

the complicated expression from the Sufis<sup>1</sup>. The poets having a mystical bent of mind cultivated this style more assiduously with smaller or greater success. Its most exquisite example is Abu Mohammad Abdullah Shahrastori's much praised poem recorded by Ibn Khallikan<sup>2</sup>. Shahrastori (d.511) wrote this symbolic poem long before Ibn al Farid (d.632) whom Ahmed Hassan Zayyat regards as the father of symbolism in Arabic poetry<sup>3</sup>. The ode with its subtle imagery and hypnotizing movement creates a mystical atmosphere and suggests spiritual realities without naming them. It has what Mallarmé's idol Poe called "a suggestive indefiniteness of vague and therefore of spiritual effect"<sup>4</sup>.

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1. The'alibi : Yatimah. Vol. I Page 124.

2. Wafajat : Vol. II Page 252 edited by Mohyiddine Abdul Hamid date not given. A modern writer Naseeb al Ikhtiar wrongly attributes this poem to Shihabuddin Suhrawardi. See his book Al-Shi'r al Sufi (Beirut) Pages 33-34. The same mistake has been committed by another writer namely Kamil al Abdullah in his book شعر ابن العربي published by دار مكتبة الحياة Beirut 1962 Pages 198-199.

3. Tarikh Adab Arabi 25th edition page 354 موسوعة السلوك العربي  
It is difficult to tell who was the father of symbolism in Arabic poetry. Some of the verses of jahiliyya period have been found to be symbolic. Ibn al Arabi, Ibn al Farid's senior contemporary, wrote symbolic poetry before him.

4. G.M. Bowra : Heritage of Symbolism page 9.

لمحت نارهم و قد عصى النبي رسل الحادى و حارب الدليل

نماطها و ذكرى من اليبس عليل و لحظ عيني كاسل

و فوادي ذاك الفؤاد المعنى و عراض ذاك الخرام الدليل

ثم فالتها رقت لصحى هذه النار اسلى بسيلوا

ضرا نحو ما لحاظا صحى ب فاعاد حواسنا و حيل

هم بالدا الى الملام و قالوا خلب ما رايت ام تحبيل

فترجبتهم و ملت اليها و الهوى سر كى و شرفى الذليل

و صحى صاحى الى يقتضى الآ نثار و الحب شرطه التطصيل

و هى تعلم و نحن ندلوا الى ان حرفة دونها طول تحول

فدلونا من الطول محالت نرفرات من دونها و سليل

قلت من بالديار قالوا جريح و اسير كليل و قنيل

ما الذى جنت بنتى قلت ضيف جاع يبرضى القرى فابن النزل

فاشارت بالرحب دونك فاعرف هاتما عند الضيف رجيل



من انا الفی عصا السیر عنه قلت من لی بها و ابن السبیل  
 فحططنا الی سائر قوم صرناهم قبل المدان التتمول  
 درس الواحد منهم کل رسم فهو رسم والقوم ذبه حلول  
 منهم من عفی ولم یبق الا شکری ولا للدموع ذبه مقبل  
 لیس الا الا ان تخر عنه وهو عنها سیراً سخر ول  
 ومن القوم من یسیر الی وجه شقی علیہ منه القلیل  
 وکل منهم ایت نظاماً شرحه فی الکتاب بما یطول  
 قلت اهل الهوی سلام علیکم لی فواد علیکم حکم شغول  
 رجھون قد افرحتھن الدوح حیناً الی لقائم سیول  
 لم یزل حافر من الشوق یحدر فی الیوم والحدائت تحول  
 واعند اری ذب فصل عند من لعلم عذری فی ترک عذری قبول  
 جنت کی اصطلی فصل فی الیوم راہم هذه الغداة سبیل  
 فاجابت شراہد الحال منهم کل حد و درہا مقلول  
 لا سر و قدک الیام الا بقا ت من درہا رباً و حول  
 کم اتاھا قوم علی غرة سہا و راہوا امرأ فخر الوصول

و ففوا شاخصين حتى اذا ما لاح للوصل غرة و حجول  
 و بعد رايه الوفا بيد الوحيد و نادى اهل الحقان جولوا  
 اين من كان يد عينا هذا اليوم فيه صبح الدماري بحول  
 حملوا جملة الفحول و لا يصريح يوم الفقا الا الفحول  
 بذلوا انفسا سخرت حين شئت لوصول و انفسهم المبيدول  
 ثم غابوا من بعد ما اترجموها بين اسراجها رجاءات سهول  
 قد فستهم الى الزوم لكل دمه في طلولها سطول  
 نارها هذه نفس لمن يسرى بليل كاشفا لا تنبل  
 سبي الخط ما تزد دمه الخط و المدة كون ذات قبل  
 جاء طاس غرت سبي انتباها و له البسط و المني و السؤل  
 فصحات عن المثال و غرت عن دلو اليه و هو رسول  
 توقفنا كم عهدهت حباري كل غم من دونها محذول  
 نرفح الوقت بالرجاء و ناصيب بقلب غدا و انزل  
 كلما ذات كاس ياس سرير جاد كاس من الرجا و حصول  
 فاذا سوت له النفس اثر حبه عنه و قيل صبر جميل  
 هذه حالنا و ما وصل العلم اليه و كل حال تحول

The light of their fire glimmered (from afar), and already the night had darkened (around us); the weary camel - driver could no longer continue his song, and our guide stood perplexed and bewitched.

I looked at that fire, but the glance of my eye was feeble; my mind also had been weakened by my separation (from the beloved); my heart was that afflicted heart (which you have known as long); and my passion, that inmost passion (which has so long been my torment). I then turned towards the flame and said to my companions : "That is Laila's fire; rein over to it". They directed towards it firm glances from their eyes; glances which were repelled and turned aside. Then my companions began to reproach me : "Was it not a flash of lightning which you saw, or else a phantom of your imagination?". On this I abandoned them and bent thither my way; desire was the camel which conveyed me, and passion the rider who sat behind me. With me was a companion (love) who followed my traces; for it is the nature of love to be importunate. The fire blazed up and we approached nearer till some time - worn ruins intervened. We went on to them till our progress was stopped by sighs and sadness. "Who dwell in these abodes?" I exclaimed, and voices answered : A wounded man, captive in bondage, and a victim slain! what seekest thou here?" \_\_\_\_ "I am a guest," was my reply; "I seek hospitality, where is the stranger's meal of welcome?" \_\_\_\_ They pointed towards the court of the dwelling: "Stop there" said they, "and kill thy camel for thy food; from us a guest never departeth any more! He who comes to us

must throw away his staff of travel". "But now", said I, "can I reach that fire? Where is the way?"

We then halted at the habitation of some people whom the wine had <sup>o</sup>pr<sup>o</sup>strated even before they had tasted of it. Passion had effaced all traces of their former existence, and had itself become the mere traces of a ruin; in this ruin they had fired their abode. Among them was one abstracted, in whom neither complaints nor tears found any longer place, his sighs alone denoted his existence, and even of these (his will) was guiltless; from these his consciousness was far apart. Among them also was one who made signs that we should observe his passion which, less intense (than that of the others), had allowed his consciousness to exist. I saw that each of them had reached stations the description of which would require a long epistle.

"People of desire", said I, "peace upon you : I have a heart so pre-occupied, with you that it perceived you not! My eyes were required to furnish torrents of tears, so great was my wish to meet you. The impulse of desire hurried me towards you, through the vicissitudes of events. I should be in fault were I to ask you pardon (for my boldness); may I then hope for a kind reception from him who knows what motive I have for not asking pardon? I have come to warm at the fire; can I find a road to your fire; now that the morning draweth near?" To this they replied not, but their external state gave me answer sufficient, as every veil between my intelligence

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( )  
and it was now vent asunder; here was the reply : let  
not the beautiful gardens deceive thee, between these  
and them are hills and pit-falls. How many have tried  
to reach that fire by surprise! They strived to attain  
the object (of their wishes), but to approach it was  
difficult. They stopped to contemplate; but when they  
had every sign of succeeding, the banner of fulfilment  
appeared, borne in the hand of passion, and the chief  
gave command to charge. 'Where', exclaimed they, where  
are they who pretend to resist us in combat? This is  
the day where in all false pretensions shall fade away!  
They charged like heroes; and on the day when foes meet  
in arm, it is the heroes alone who fall. They lavished  
every effort, whilst the object of their desire avoided  
their approach and slighted all their endeavours. They  
plunged into the abyss and disappeared in its waves;  
the currents then cast them back among the ruins which  
they now stained with their blood, shed, alas! in vain.  
Such is our fire; it shineth for him who travelleth  
at night, but it cannot be reached. The share of it  
which falls to the sight is the utmost which can be  
obtained; but those able to conceive this are few in  
number. One whom you well know went towards it, hoping  
to take from it a brand; he approached it with out-  
stretched arms, with wishes and supplications, but it  
rose far beyond his reach; it was too exalted to abide  
his proximity, and yet he was a prophet. We therefore

rest amazed as thou hast seen; all our efforts to reach it being vain; we pass away the time in (the delusions of) hope, but judge what is the state of that heart whose ~~Aliments~~ consists in being tentatized! Each time it tastes the bitter cup of mis fortune, another cup is brought to it, sweetened with hope. Each time fancy sets a project before us, we are turned away from it and told that patient resignation befits us best. Such is our state, such is all that our knowledge can attain; but every state must undergo a change<sup>1</sup>.

Symbols are an expression of man's unique self - consciousness, his capacity to transcend the immediate concrete situation and see his life in terms of the possible, and that this capacity is one aspect of his experiencing himself as a being having a world. While going through the ode we enter this world and transcend the mundane realities. Its tale like symbolism is apt to be taken for allegory as the borderline between the two is not always easily discernible for both aim at the same goal from opposite ends. The symbol is something concrete and specific that is intended to convey something spiritual or general, either as an indicating sign, i.e., an act of pointing, or as an actual representation in which the dynamic division of the sign is

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1. Ibn Khallikan : Wafayat, Vol. II, P. 252. *op. cit.*

abolished : that which points, that which it points to, and the act of pointing, have become one and the same. This is exactly what we find in the poem. It is an organic whole in which the symbol and the symbolized are fused inseparably. The Greek word *syballein*, from which symbol derives means : to "bring together" or to "come together", the symbolic representation is coming together, to the point of complete fusion, of the concrete and spiritual, the specific and general. Allegory, conversely, starts from something primarily general and abstract, a purely conceptual entity, which it clothes in a concrete body. Related distinction between allegory and symbol have been made by Goethe and Colbridge. Goethe : "Allegory transforms the phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) into an abstract concept (*Begriff*), the concept into an image, but in such a way that concept can still be expressed and beheld in the image in a clearly circumscribed and complete form. Symbolism transforms the phenomenon into an idea, the idea into an image, in such a way that the idea remains for ever infinitely active and unreachable in the image and, even if expressed in all languages, still inexpressible" (*Maximen und Reflexionen Aus dem Nachlass*) "We may speak of true symbolism, when the particular represents the more general not as a dream or shadow but as a living instantaneous revelation of the inscrutable."

(Maximen and Re-flaxinen Aus Kunst und Alter-tum 1826)<sup>1</sup>.

Coleridge : Allegory is merely "a translation of abstract notions into a picture language which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of senses .... a symbol is characterized by translucence of the special (the species) in the individual; or of the general in the special.....; above all by the translucence of eternal through and in the temporal."<sup>2</sup> This sublime ode with its superb symbolism enables us to see the eternal in and through the temporal.

Ibn Khallikan and Imad<sup>3</sup> Isfahani quote Shahrastori's other poems written in mystic style but they pale into insignificance before this famous ode. Among the others who wrote in the manner of sufis we may mention Haskafi<sup>4</sup> (d.551 A.D), Ibnul 'Arif<sup>5</sup> (d. 536 A.H.) the renowned spanish mystic (who wrote the famous sufi treatise Mahasin ul Majalis) and Ahmad<sup>6</sup> Ibnur Rifai' (d.578 A.H.) The most dominating personality of this century (6th A.H.) is Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani whom we propose to study next.

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1. Rollo May : Symbolism in Religion and Literature George Braziller (1960) New York Pages 70-71.
  2. The statesman's manual, quoted by René Wellek and Austin Warren in Theory of Literature, New York (1949) page 193-A.
  3. Imad Isfahani : Kharida (edited by Shukri faissal, 1959, Damascus) pages 309-321 Vol.II.
  4. Ibid Page 495.
  5. Ibn Khallikan : Wafayat (Egyptian edition 1310 A.H) Vol. I Page 54.
  6. Ibid Page 55.



ABDUL QADIR JILANI :

Sheikh Muhyid Din Abdul Qadir Jilani, a junior contemporary of Ghazali, lived from 470 A.H. to 561 A.H. and was the most influential sufi after him. His prose works are well known throughout the East but his poetry save one ode known as *Qasida Ghausia* is generally neglected. Sixteen odes attributed to him have been recorded on the margin of Bahjatul<sup>1</sup> Asrar of Nurud Din Shatanooft (A.D.1249 - 1313/AR). The first of these is the longest and contain about four hundred verses<sup>2</sup>, and is called Aynia because the rhyme ends in the letter Ayn<sup>3</sup>.

The authenticity of this ode is highly doubtful : It contains many verses from the Aynia of Abdul Karim Jali including those recorded by him in the twenty third chapter of his *Insanul Kamil*. Seventy of the ninty nine selected verses of Abdul Karim Jili's Aynia

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1. Bahjat ul Asar fi Ba'd Manaqibil Qutbur Rabbani Muhyid Din Abdil Qadir published by Mustafa al-Sabi Egypt 1330 A.H. pages 182-238.

2. We may give here the approximate number of verses contained in odes on the margin from pages 182 to 238.

Ode No.	2,	3,	4,	5,	6,	7,	8,	9,	10,	11,	12,	13
No. of verses (approx.)	35,	35,	8,	10,	10,	8,	80,	27,	16,	21,	12,	3

Ode No.	14,	15,	16,	17,
No. of verses	6	10	10	7.

3. Bahja : Page 182.

published by R.A. Nicholson in his Studies in Islamic Mysticism are to be found in this ode pointed on the margin of Bahjah. I think the ode actually belongs to Jili and has been wrongly attributed to Abdul Qadir Jilani. Nine of the remaining odes are ecstatic utterances<sup>1</sup> known as Shath in Sufi terminology. The saints speaks of his spiritual glory unextremely egotistic tone. He often employs the symbolism of wine to express his mystical states which are superior or to those of all other saints who according to him are no more than dependants on his grace for the attainment of gnosis. He claims that not only he is a director of souls and dispenser of divine light but as omnipotent as the Almighty Himself as he has been united with the ultimately reality. He can work wonders. Although the dominant note of these odes is self - aggrandisement but they actually symbolise humanity conscious of its higher destiny. In fact these odes are hymns to the glory of mankind. We quote the most famous one known as Khamriyya or Qasida Ghausia.

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1. One of these (No.7) beginning with line  
" انا القرآن والسمح الثاني " belongs to Ibn  
Arabi and is wrongly attributed to  
Abdul Qadir Jilani.

نسائي اطب كاسات الاصال قطب الحمرى محوى لعالى  
 دست رشت محوى فى كورس دست سكرى بن الموالى  
 قطب نسائى الاطاب لموا بحالى داد خلا انتم رجالي  
 و بصير اراشردا انتم جنودى نسائي التوم بالوانى لالى  
 شرم فضلى بن اود سكرى ولا نلتم على و اتصالى  
 نسائي سلم الادلا جواد كن ستقاى خوتكم بازال عالى  
 انانى خفزه التوب دوى بصرى رضى دواجلال  
 انابارى اشوب كل شيخ دس دانى الرجال اعطى شالى ا  
 درست العلم حتى مرت قطبا دلت اسد من سولى الموالى  
 كسالى خلاصه بطراز دوتو حى بشجان الملك  
 و اطلانى على ستر دريم و دلى و اسطانى سوادى  
 طبول فى السواد ارض دت و شاديس السعادة قد بدالى  
 انا اسنى و المجدع ستاى دانداسى على عيش الرجال  
 و دلاى على الاطاب حجا فحكى نافذ فى كل حال

نظرت الی بلاد الله جمعا کثر دله علی حکم اتصال  
 دلو القیت سری نوں تاپیر لیسرت دالطفت من سر حالی  
 دلو القیت سری حق بیت لقام بعد دالمولی شالی  
 دلو القیت سری فی جبال لکنت داحتفت من الزوال  
 دلو القیت سری فی بخار نصار اسکل غوراً فی الزوال  
 دلو القیت سری اوددهور غور دشتقی الا الی  
 دلو القیت سری دیکری داحتفتی ناقص من جد الی  
 دلو الله تلک تحت قلمی ووقتی قبل قلی قد صغالی  
 سریری لا تحف دشتقی غزوم قاتل عن القاتل  
 سریری لا تحف الله ربی سلطان رفقه انت المعالی  
 سریری تم دطب داسطخ دغنی دامل مانتشاء نالام عالی  
 دکل ولی له دم دالی علی دم البنی بدرا نکمال  
 انا الجیلی حنی الدین آسی داملوسی علی راس الجبال  
 دعد القادر سیدرایی دجری صاحب العین انکمال



Love served me with the cups of ( wine ) union.  
I said to the wine which was my lot, "come to me".

It ( wine ) hastened and walked towards me in  
cups. So from amongst my friends it was I who came to  
love my intoxication so passionately. I said to all the  
Poles, "Alight at my tavern and get into it, you are  
all my men. Have a thirst for it and drink, you are my  
troops. The Saqi of the people has filled (my cup) to  
the brims. You have quaffed what I left as remnant  
after I was drunk, so you did not attain heights of my  
glory and unification (with God).

All of you are placed at a high station but my  
place is still higher. I am alone in the place of  
nearness to God and the glorified One has entrusted me  
with the management of affairs and He suffices me.

I am the gray hawk of every sheikh.

Who among the men can be a match for me?

I acquired knowledge until I became a Pole and  
the Friend of friends (or Lord of Lords) made me  
auspicious.

He dressed me in a robe embroidered with honour  
and he crowned me with the crowns of perfection.

He intimated me with the ancient secret,  
He garlanded me and granted what I asked for.

My drums were beaten in the sky and on the earth.  
And the constable of happiness appeared before me.

I am a descendent of Hassan (grand-son of the prophet) and a closet is my proper place and my steps are on the necks of the men<sup>1</sup> (I step on the necks of men). He has made me a governor of all poles and my orders are enforced under all conditions. When I looked at the countries of God they appeared as small as the mustard seed under the impact of unification. If I put my secret on fire it will burn no more and the mystery of my condition will extinguish it. And if I put my secret on the dead he will be resurrected and walk towards me by God's grace. And if I put my secret on the mountains they will be smashed and hidden in the sands. If I put my secret in the oceans all of them will sink below and come to an end.

All the months and times, current or past, come to me, and tell me what is about to come and what is going on and thus giving me knowledge. So I withhold my fight (struggle).

Countries of God, being my own territory, are under my command. My time was pure (from the adulteration of evil) even before I purified my heart.

My disciple, do not fear the tale<sup>2</sup> bearer, as I have determination enough to kill in a battle.

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1. Men (Rifal) here means the saints.

2. Tale bearer is perhaps Satan.

My disciple, have no fears, Allah is my Lord. He gave me a high place and I have achieved glories. My disciple, love, have a good time, be besides your-self with emotion and sing. Do whatever you like. The great name (of God) is (with us).

Every saint has some body to follow while I follow in the foot-steps of prophet who is the full moon of perfection.

I am a jili, my name is Muhyid Din and my banners are on tops of the mountains. But my other name i.e., Abdul Qadir is well known and my grand-father was the most perfect man<sup>1</sup>.

Tenth poem is a prayer for the removal of hardships while the eleventh and the twelfth throw light on the spiritual glory of the saint. The latter is more poetical and comparatively less egolistical. In sharp contrast to this pretentious and ostentatious style of ecstatic poems is the meek and plaintive tone of the odes expressing the humble mood of a munajat or prayer addressed to God for help and a blessing. But both genres are equally genuine expressions of different mental or spiritual states as it is said that a sufi is dominated by his state (Maghlubal hal). Abdul qadir Jilani was usually in an exalted mood and we have only four small poems written in a lowly spirit. To quote from one of these :

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1. Shatanofi, Bahja, op.cit. PP.230-232 (margin)

O', the Most Powerful! Thou who heedst  
the call! I seek thy aid.

O' the absolute ruler ! Help the bewildered one.  
Thou art my only hope in distress

Thou comest to the rescue of one who asks for  
thy succour.

Respond to the call of the aggrieved one who  
complains of his trouble.

His wings are broken. He has none to help him<sup>1</sup>.

Jilani's contemporary Ibnul Kizani (d.562) was a  
mystic poet of some merit. Dr. Ali Safi Hossain has  
worked on his life and poetry<sup>2</sup>. But the most fascinating  
genius of this period is Suhrawardy Halabi (or Maqtool)  
whom we shall study in the following chapter.

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1. Behja, op. cit P.220.

2. See his "Ibnul Kizani" published by Dar al  
Ma'arif, Egypt.



SUH RAWARDY :

Suhrawardy al Maqtool<sup>1</sup> (d. 587 A.H / 1191 A.D.) is one of the most outstanding figures of the intellectual movement which sought to interpret Quran and the doctrines of Islam in an esoteric and allegorical manner. He is linked through Avicenna and al-Farabi with the philosophical tradition in sufism and is the immediate precursor of Ibnul Arabi for his esoteric explanations

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1. Suhrawardi was born in 549 / 1153 in the village of Suhraward near the modern city of Zanjan and studied philosophy with Majd al Din al-Jili, the teacher of Imam Fakhruddin al-Razi in Maraghab. After completing his studies he set out to travel and met several Sufi masters and entered upon Sufi path and spent long periods in spiritual retreats. It was during these journeys that he met Malik Zahir, the son of famous Salah-al Din al-Ayyubi, who invited him to stay at his court at Aleppo. Suhrawardy accepted the offer and stayed with Malik Zahir. But his outspoken manner, his lack of prudence in exposing esoteric doctrines before all kinds of audiences, the keen intelligence which enabled him to overcome all opponents in debate, his mastery in both discursive philosophy and Sufism - all these factors combined to make many enemies for him, especially among some of the doctors of the law. They asked for his execution on the grounds of propagating doctrines against the tenets of Islam. Suhrawardy was imprisoned and died in 587/1191, the immediate cause of his death remained a secret but it is generally believed that he was killed. So he met with the same fate as that of al Hallaj to whom he was very much attracted and whose saying he quotes in his writings

of the religious teachings. One finds in Suhrawardy alongside the Peripatetic ideas all that mystic philosophy which Islam obtained from Hellenistic syncretism, all the mixture of Neoplatonic doctrines, Hermetic theories, occult sciences, Gnostic traditions, and Neo Pythagorean elements. But his main inspiration are the muslim sufis, particularly al Hallaj and al - Ghazali, whose Mishkat al Anwar has influenced him a lot. Universality of Islam enabled him to integrate many diverse elements into his mystical philosophy. Neoplatonist Asclepiades had composed a treatise on the agreement of all religions. Suhrawardy also came to believe that there was one truth underlying all the various philosophies whether religious or secular, philosophers as well as prophets pointed to the same reality which he describes as the philosophy of Illumination. The corner stone of this philosophy is God who is Prime Light (Noor ul Anwar) and the origin of all that exists or to quote from Suhrawardy's own words : The Essence of the First Absolute Light, God, gives constant illumination, whereby it is manifested and it brings all things into existence, giving life to them by its rays. Everything in the world is derived from the Light of His essence and all beauty and perfection are the gift of His bounty, and and to attain fully to this illumination is salvation<sup>1</sup>.

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1. This translated passage from Hikmat al-ishraq is taken from M. Smith's Readings from the Mystics of Islam (London, 1950), page 79. It shows, like Suhrawardy's several other works, that Iqbal's observation that "he is a pan-theist in so far as he defines God as the sum total of all sensible and ideal existence", is not very accurate. His pantheism is more properly speaking

All other lights are derived from His light and are of the foundations of the spiritual and material world. Thus Suhrawardy adds Zoroastrian symbols of light and darkness to Al Farabi's theory of ten intelligences but he believes that the intelligences are innumerable. Moreover unlike Farabi he is not contented with his connection with the active intellect but seeks union with God (Noor al Anwar)<sup>1</sup>. His mystic experience is a perception in which true essences of things, which exist for themselves in the heavenly world, illuminate the understanding. Suhrawardy's Cosmopolitan spirit makes him believe that these lights were experienced by all the ancient sages by freeing their spirits from the bondage of the body and many hints made by the prophets and the philosopher bear testimony to it<sup>2</sup>.

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(\*)  
Foot-note contd.  
from last page

(\*)  
that of Wahdat ul Wajud or Unity of Being which obviously does not reduce God to this sum total. Iqbal seems to confuse Noor al Anwar with Noor-i-Qabir. See his book The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, published by Bazm-i-Iqbal (1964) pages 98-114.

1. Hikmat al Ishraq (Iran) page : 281.

2. Ibid Pages 370-371.

Plato, Socrates, Hermes, Agathodaemon and Empedocles also hold the same opinion. The philosophers of India and Persia too experienced the same light<sup>1</sup>: Zoroaster also informs us about these spiritual illuminations which were enjoyed by the emperor Kai Khusraw as well<sup>2</sup>. According to Suhrawardy his philosophy of Illumination (Ishraq) is not based on thought and reasoning as they occupy only secondary position in the scheme of his thoughts. Intellectual intimation, contemplation and ascetic discipline are the real sources of his mystic philosophy, which is later on supplemented by arguments. Because this insight depends upon the intimate personal experience it is not to be harmed by scepticism. He is supported by the similar experiences of deist philosopher like Plato whom he calls his leader (Imam) of wisdom and master (Rais)<sup>3</sup>.

Despite his deep interest in philosophy he does not use his poetry as the medium of his philosophical ideas. It is simple and spontaneous, as it springs from his emotional life which closely affects and is affected by his philosophy. His poetry though extremely personal, is not a projection of his private ego only. Its appeal is universal as he generalises his personal experience. When his spirit is filled with longing for the divine union he thinks of other kindred souls tortured by the same agony of love. His most famous ode, the Haiya, written in the same spirit. This melodious poem has all the charm of the lyrical poetry of the highest order, and is sung by the sufis in their retreats and assemblies for dhikr.

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1. Ibid Page 371.

2. Ibid Page 372.

3. Ibid Page 14.





عودوا بنور الرضی فی حق الحقا فالتجرین والبر والصلح صباح  
 بالی وصالهم انفسه شفاة دالی انما کم لانه طماح  
 حلت الی بکونه الارواح دالی انما سواد ما سراج  
 کما ناسا اجسامهم وعلوهم فی صوته المشکاة والمصاح  
 بعد الانام من انعام دالما لود الحجة فی السلام صباح  
 من باح بینهم بذكر حیدیه دسه حلال لیسوف صباح  
 وتغیر انما لود طاب لکم من السراب ورفقت الافراح  
 یا صباح لیس فی الحب جناح ان لا ح من انی الواصل صباح  
 حضرت انما لود من یود دالهم ونبهوا الماراده وصالها  
 انما هم عنهم وکشف لهم بحب البقا فلاست الادرار  
 نعم یانعم الی الودام فنانها فی کاسها قد دانت الافراح  
 من کرم اکرام بدین دیانة لا خمرة قد داسها الفلاح  
 فی حمة الحب الذی هم وشفی من الذی هم فسمع دانت الافراح  
 فی اکثر فی اوله آدم اولا وعلیه منها طاعة وود صباح  
 وکذا ان فرج فی السقینة اکثر وله بزار رنة ونباح

فستبجوا ان یلم بکونوا شملهم  
 ان الشبهة باکرام فلاح

The souls long for Thee perpetually,  
Thy union is for them like basil and wine.  
The lover's hearts yearn for thee,  
Cheered they are, as they look forward to Thy  
pleasing encounter.

Alas! for the lovers who tried to veil their  
loves, while the passion is a revealer of the  
secret.

If they disclose it, it will be lawful to shed  
their blood. This is how the blood of the revealers  
is shed

Even if they conceal their passion, their  
flowing tears inform the tale bearers.  
Signs of their malady became visible, making  
their affair obvious, (to all).

O'friends! What a havoc has been caused by your  
desertion, reform does not mean damaging others.  
Be generous to meet your poor comrade as the  
loving one is happy to see you. He is humble to you,  
the humility of the lover should not be considered  
a sin

Bring back the light of union to dispel the  
darkness of desertion, as separation is night and  
union is dawning of day.

His soul yearns for your pleasure and his glance  
is fixed at your meeting.

The souls long for His Kingdom and are not  
pleased by seeing anything else.

His light shows that their bodies are niche  
and their hearts are lamps.

These creatures are darkness and the light of  
love is like morning in the dusk.

If some one among them divulges his love by  
mentioning his beloved, his blood is lawfully  
shed @ with the swords.

Avail yourselves of the opportunity, as the time  
is fine for union.

Wine and the cups are equally fine.

He was pure for them, so their hearts became  
pure due to His light which is both niche and  
lamp at the same time.

The lovers did not sin when over-powered by  
passion they were unable to conceal their love.

Betrayed by emotions they disclosed their secret.  
They were generous enough to lay down their lives.

They were not stingy of them when they came to  
know that generosity was the real profit.

They received a call from reality, and came to  
love it and departed to respond to it.

They boarded the ships of fidelity, their tears  
being the ocean and the intensity of their love  
was the sailor.

By God, they did not choose to stay at his gate  
until they were invited and given the key to open it.

Their pleasure lies in the mention of their  
Beloved. They are happy all their lives.



O shouter! Lover is not to be blamed if the morn  
appears on the horizon of union.

Being in the divine presence they were lost to  
themselves. On seeing Him they vent their ~~garments~~  
garments and cried.

He made them die to themselves while the curtains  
of life (subsistence in God) were unveiled for  
them and the souls were annihilated.

Rise ! O boon - companion ! Give me a cup of wine.

Pegs are being circulated among the drunkards.

Give me wine brewed from the vine of nobility  
poured in the vessel of honesty. The wine trodden  
under farmer's feet is not needed.

It is the wine of love for the Eternal one ---  
the farthest object of a boon companion's desire !  
How fine is this wine.

This wine intoxicated Adam in his robe and girdle  
in the Paradise.

It intoxicated Noah in the boat and made him  
moan and mourn.

If you are unlike the nobles, try to resemble them.  
Resemblance with the nobles is a read~~ed~~ success<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Some of these verses are recorded by Ibn Khallikan  
Vol. II (Egypt 1310 Hijrah) page 262 and in  
Miratul Janan by Yafiee Vol. III (Hyderabad Deccan,  
India 1338 Hijri) page 436, and in Mu'jam al Odeba  
of Yaqt. The maximum number of verses have been  
quoted in Shahrasturi's Muzhat ul arwah war-raudat  
ul afrah. Otto spies and S.K. Khatak have included  
this entire ode in their book "Three Treatises on  
Mysticism" along with other poems. Our version of  
the ode is according to the last mentioned book  
with a few changes.

This poetical expression of soul's longing a for divine realities and its passionate love for the ultimate truth, though sharply contrasted with the metaphysical and subtle discussion of the attraction of the smaller lights for greater ones and ultimately for the supreme light (Noor ul Anwar) in his Hikmet al Ishraq<sup>1</sup>, is not unconnected with it. The images of light, darkness, morning and night used in the poem have their roots in his philosophy of Illumination. Almost all of his poems contain this imagery of darkness and light.

Suhrawardy wrote a lot about the soul and he believed like Avicenna and Plato in its descent from heaven and its longing for repatriation. He wrote a poem on soul on the model of Avicenna's famous ode on soul quoted above. Only seven verses of this poem ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ have been preserved by the time.

خاست حیا کما بجرعاً والحی و صبت لادنا القدم شرقاً  
 رجع به سرت و از سر صبحها و تحریرت حیا اجد اخلقا  
 و لفتت نحو الدیار شاد و ساعاً عفا اطلال و شہر قاف  
 و رفت ترود فی الدفا حینما قردم بر طاراق المرنی  
 و رفت لسان ترود جواسفا رجع الہدی ان یل الالق

1. See for example Hikmat al Ishraq (with Shirazi's commentary, Tehran 1316 A.H.)  
 Pages : 494-502.

It left its lofty abode at the interdicted sandy ground and longed passionately for its old dwellings<sup>1</sup>.

It was veiled and its dawn shined when it unveiled and isolated itself from what was dry and worn out.

Turning towards home it witnessed a place with worn out traces and torn out pieces.

Its longing continued in the atmosphere for some time and then it aimed at a remote spring abode on an ascending place. It stopped to question it and the returning echo told it that there was no possibility of meeting.

So it wept over the place of its affection for the departed ones. It seemed to be a flash of lightning which vanished in the dark as if it had never shined.

Suhrawardy believes that man has a high destiny provided he endeavours to be constantly linked with Divine reality.

حاصلی ان الایں فی فرقة الایں نكن ابدًا نأشت حی حفرة القدس  
آتش لا سوت و تنقی بلا دنا و تلحق بالمعنی و تنأی عن الحسن  
و تلطف الافلاک فیما اتبته و یشرق نور ربک دائرة الشمس  
فانت هو المعنی و ذیل و جوده و ذیل جمیع الخلق و العرش و الكرسی

1. Cf. Michael Angelo :

Heaven-born, the soul a heav'n-ward course must hold  
-hold, Beyond the visible world she soars to seek  
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)  
Ideal form, the universal mould —

Wordsworth's translation

My friend, intimacy (with God) lies in being separated from mankind.

Be always in the presence of Divinity so long as you are alive.

Then you will pass your days without the taste of death and you will live without (the fear of ) annihilation, connected with the meaning (essence) away from the senses.

The heavens will envy your lot and the light of your spirituality will illuminate the sun. You are that meaning (essence), its (essence's) very existence is contained in you. All the creation, heaven and chair are placed within you! <sup>1</sup>

The last verse of this short poem seems to point out that Suhrawardy considered man as microcosm.

Like all great intellectuals he was not free from the moods of scepticism and sang in purely Epicurean spirit.

فتر بالبحيم نان شرک ينفذ      و انضم ادر نيا نديس محمد  
واذا ظفرت بلذة فانهمض لها      لا يمتنعك عن حوائض مضد  
وصل الصبح مع الفوق فانما      دنياك يوم واحد يتبدد

1. Otto spies and S.K. Khallak : Three treatise on Mysticism (Stuttgart 1935) Page : 108.



Enjoy the luxuries, the life is short.  
Treat the worldly pleasures to be a booty  
because they are not going to last long.  
If you are lucky to win an object of pleasure,  
make haste to enjoy it. Let no blamer stand  
between you and your lust.  
Drink from dawn to dusk as your stay in the world  
is for one day only<sup>1</sup>.

That Suhrawardy's mysticism enabled him to face  
his death courageously is borne out by this beautiful  
poem written in the last moments of life :

لا تظنوني بالي ميت ليس هذا البيت رائي انا  
انا مصفوء روم هذا انقضى طرقت منه فتخلي راحنا  
وانا البوم انا حي لا واري الله عما ناسنا  
فانخلوا الانفس من اجسادها ترومن الحق صفا بيننا

Do not think I am dead. By God! This corpse is  
not myself. I am a sparrow and this (body) is  
my cage. I have flown away leaving it empty.  
Today, I am whispering to the celestial beings,  
and looking at God in all clearness.  
Remove the souls from their bodies and you will  
see the Real in all His brightness.

1. Ibn Abi Osabi'a : 'Myyoon al Anba fi tabaqat il  
Atibba'; edited by Dr. N.Raza (Beirut 1965)  
Page : 465.

Let not the pangs of death frighten you. It is nothing but a migration from this transitory world<sup>1</sup>.

Umar Suhrawardy :

Suhrawardy Maqtool's compatriot bearing the same place - name Shihabuddin 'Umar Suhrawardy (d.632) was more fortunate; a model of orthodox moderation, he enjoyed the confidence and patronage of caliphs and princes. He conveys his mystical experiences in charming verses using the symbolism of the Spiritual Marriage between God and the Soul : a symbolism which goes back to the orphic Mysteries, and thence descended via the Neoplatonists unto the stream of Sufi tradition. His poetry, by the use of metaphors which are hardly human yet charged with the passionate feeling, tells the secret of the union in which heart speaks to heart

تصرت وحشة الیالی واقبلت دولة الوصال  
 وصار بالوصل لی حروماً من كان فی حجرکم رشی لی  
 رحقکم بعد ان حصلتم بكل ما فات لا ابالی  
 ا جیتونی رکت بیتنا و بعتمونی بفسرنا لی  
 نقاصرت عنکم قلوب فیاله سروراً حلاً لی  
 علی ما لوردی صرام و حبکم فی الحنا حلاً لی

The dreariness of the (lover's solitary) nights was dispelled and his turn of union (with the beloved) drew near : and my union with Thee made those jealous, who used to pity me formerly when suffering from Thy aversion<sup>1</sup>. I swear by the ~~same~~ truth of Thy existence that, since Thou art now present I care not for any of my former disappointments. Thou camest to me who was deprived of life and small was the price for which Thou didst obtain me (he was dead by sin and became the servant of God by renouncing the world). The hearts (of men) are unable to conceive Thee; but, O, the delicious source whereof I am allowed to drink! (I avow that) all which is forbidden to mortals is forbidden also to me; but how sweet in my bosom is the love I bear Thee. Love for Thee has drenched my very bones : what then have I to do with that which is not love? Bitter thirst oppresseth not the destitute when near him, are sources of the purest water<sup>2</sup>.

What the mystic here desires to tell us is, that his new life is not only a free and conscious participation in the life of Eternity but also the conscious sharing of an inflowing personal life greater than his own; a tightening of the bonds of that

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1. This idea has already been expressed by al-Hallaj. See page.

2. Ibn Khallikan : Wafayat al A'yan (edited by M. Abdul Hamid), Cairo, 1948, Vol.III, P.119-120.

companionship which has been growing in intimacy and splendour during the course of the Mystic Way. His transfigured soul moves to the measure of a "love dance" which persists in mirth through every outward hardships and privation. He enjoys the high spirits : and shocks the world by a delicate playfulness, instead of exhibiting the morose resignation which it feels to be proper to the spiritual life. Moreover, the most clear-sighted amongst the mystics declare such joy to be an implicit of Reality. Thus Dante, initiated into Paradise, sees the whole Universe laugh with delight as it glorifies God<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Par. xxvii, 4.



Ash-Shaykhul Akbar (Doctor Maximus ) Muhyid-Din Ibn 'Arabi whose fame rests on his doctrine of Wahdatul Wujud (Unity of Being) expounded in several prose works has written a considerable amount of mystical poetry. Besides a divan published at Bulaq in 1855 A.D. (1271 A.H.) his following prose works are the main sources of his poetry :

- 1.- His most voluminous work Futuhat Makkiyya spread over more than three thousand pages of a large size is a very important source of his poetry. Poetical pieces of varying length have been affixed to all the 560 chapters of its different books. But these opening verses are dependent for

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Ibn Arabi was born at Murcia (south-east of Spain) in 560 A.H. (1164 A.D.) and received his early religious instructions at Lisbon. After a this preliminary education he left for Seville, a great centre of Spanish Sufis of the time, and stayed there for thirty years. He travelled through Spain and Maghrib and visited Cordova (where he met the great Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd), Fes, Morocco and Tunis. In 598/1201, he set out for East for pilgrimage. On his way he lived for a time in Egypt where an attempt on his life was made for holding unorthodox views. He escaped assassination through the good offices of an influential Shaykh and left Egypt to travel throughout the middle East. He visited Baghdad twice. He taught and wrote at Mecca and finally settled at Damascus where he died in A.H. 638 (A.D. 1240).

their meanings on the chapters. Ibnul Arabi himself explains this unusual manner which is quite the reverse of the commonly followed practice by the writers of such treatises. "Know, may Allah succour you and us, this ode and every other ode prefixed to a chapter of this book is not meant to be a summary of what is treated exhaustively in the prose of the chapter. Neither have we talked about it. Rather the verse itself is one of the means of explaining the prose text, as what follows the verse does repeat ideas contained in it. So consult the verse in order to interpret the chapter just as the prose is consulted to understand it. Verse deals with some of the problems of this chapter which have been omitted by prose<sup>1</sup>". So this poetry is a repository of very important mystical thoughts: Prose of the book alone is not sufficient enough to appreciate Ibnul Arabi's ideas thoroughly. His poetry contains, as we shall have occasion to see, not only all the cardinal points of his doctrine but several minor details of mystic path.

- 2.- His shorter prose work, the celebrated Fusus ul Hikam which may be regarded his opus magnum (of which many commentaries have been written) also contains a

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1. Futuhut Vol.II (Chapter 293) Page : 663.

few valuable pieces of mystical verse more closely integrated with the prose. Here both prose and poetry explain each other.

- 3.- Mawaqifun - Hujum, a very valuable manual of mystical teaching for it is easier to understand, profusely uses poetry to explain the mysteries of the way.
- 4.- Muhadaratul Abrar is a source of some love poems which Ibnul Arabi wants us to interpret symbolically. Besides these several of his other prose books include his poetry. But the most poetic of all his verse has been treasured in his short collection of Odes entitled Tarjumanul Ashwaq of which we propose to talk later

Odes of Futuhut and short poetic pieces of Fusus are highly reflective and inornate. They are overloaded with meanings and contain the quintessence of his mystic thought. Many of these lack poetic appeal and seem to be prosaic. Some of them may be regarded as versified mystical formulae. But there is no dearth of inspired poetry in these two highly serious and intellectual master pieces. It appeals more to the intellect than to emotions and open vistas of deep thoughts which are themselves strangely poetic for the mind seeking ripeness<sup>s</sup> and maturity.

We propose to study some of the main aspects of his mystical philosophy expressed through the medium of verse.

With Abnūl 'Arabi the sufi theosophy reached its culmination. His doctrine of Wahdatul Wujud, variously translated as Pan theism, pantheistic monism or unity of Being, is the most splendid achievement of Islamic mysticism. It has been acknowledged by the later sufis to be the fundamental spiritual truth traceable in Quran and prophetic traditions. The notion, it is held was present in Islam from the very beginnings, but was never presented so elaborately. Ibnul Arabi made it a complete and magnificent system as Louis Massignon, briefly sketching it's history writes :

"The doctrine of Wujudiyya claims long descent : it turns to its advantage the Quranic verses (11.109; XXVIII, 88; L, 15) ..... Abnūl Arabi was first to formulate this doctrine, for him at the bottom is "the existence of created things is nothing but the very essence of the existence of the Creator". *وجود المخلوقات* ( " *عين وجود الحق* " , Ibn Taymia justly remarked)

He teaches in fact that things necessarily emanate from divine prescience in which they pre-existed (Thābit<sup>but</sup>) as ideas, by a flux involving five periods<sup>1</sup> and that the souls by an inverse involution logically constructed

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1. These five periods are technically called five determinations (Ta'ayyinat) or descents (Tanazzulat) which the Pure Divine Essence Daht-o-Baht) undergoes in the process of creation. In the first descent (which is



reintegrate the divine essence Farhani and Jili only added a few touches of detail to this main theory, which to this day has remained that of all Muslim mystics. It is the one which the Persian poets have sung interminably in the simplified form which qonvi, putting into order the ideas of Attar expresses thus : "God is existence in as much it is general and unconditional"., it is that which flows, like the sea under its waves through the fleeting forms of individual beings. At the end of Seventeenth Century Kawrani and Nabulsi aroused the indignation of orthodox Sunnis by concluding that this

(Foot-note contd.)  
(from pre-page 1)

variously called Wahdat, first Tajalli; Haqiqat Mohammadiyya etc), the pure Essence becomes conscious of itself. In the second descent (called Second Tajalli i.e., manifestation, Haqiqat Insani, Hadrak of names and attributes etc) the essence becomes conscious of itself as possessing attributes. These first two descents are conceptual rather than actual. In the third descent called al Ta'ayyun al Rubi the unity of the essence assumes the multiplicity of spirits. In the fourth descent called Ta'ayyun-i-Mithali or ideal determination the world of Ideas comes into being. The fifth descent, Ta'ayyun-i-Jasad, creates phenomena or physical things.

(This is the summary of the first three pages of the Jami's short treatise named Risala Maratib Sittah, a manuscript in Panjab University Library, Lahore No. PCIV.8. Mujaddid also follows it (See Maklubat Vol. II Ex.) and adds that these stages are also called Hadrahs. Jami uses the word "Maratib" meaning stages. He adds a sixth stage called the stage of humanity (Martaba ul Insani) which includes all other five stages). Louis Massignon, however, includes the stage of Pure and indeterminate stage of Divine Essence. His five stages are the mone'ite ('wahah, ispa'ite'); the unity (wa'hidiyah, the reality of Muhammad); the unicity (human reality, shadiya, the first irradiation); the second irradiation (science of created ideas); and the creation of ideas & bodies. La Passion d'at Hallaj (Paris, 1922) V. II, P. 631

pantheistic monism is the only correct interpretation to give to the monotheistic profession of faith in Islam; in their eyes, the shahada<sup>1</sup> by which Islam<sup>2</sup> had thought to affirm the pure transcendence of One God signifies the absolute immanence of God in his creation and that the totality of all beings in their action is divinely adorable<sup>3</sup>." Ibnul Arabi's doctrine stated in a nutshell is that eternal and phenomenal are one and latter is the

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1. Shaha'da means the formula that there is one Divinity but Allah. It is also called Kalima al Tawh'id. Sufi interpretation of Tauheed or Unity is quite different from that of the scholastic theologians (Mutakallimun) or that of the Shari'a. While the theologians mean by tauheid that there is no <sup>God</sup> but Allah, the sufis mean that nothing exists except Allah. In other words they mean to say that everything is only a manifestation of God or God is everything. Logically it means God's immanence. Ghazali, lends his support to this view in the Fada'il al Anam where he argues that two things cannot become one : for either both exist, in which case they are not identical; or one exists and the other does not, in which case again there is no identity, or they both do not exist, and in that case there is no identity either. So' perfect tawhid means that nothing exists except the One' Fada'il al Anam, edited by Moayyid Thabiti, Tehran (1333 A.H.) page 24.
2. It would be better to say official Islam of the theologians (Orthodoxy).
3. Encyclopaedia of Islam, S.V. Tasawwuf.

<sup>x</sup>  
external manifestation of the former, i.e., Creation is the outward aspect of the Creator. "According to Ibnul 'Arabi there is only One Reality in existence. This reality we view from two different angles, now calling it Haqq (the Real) when we regard it as the Essence of all phenomena; and now Khaliq when we regard it as the phenomena manifesting that essence. Haqq and Khaliq : Reality and appearance; the One and the many are only names for two subjective aspects of One Reality; it is a real unity but ~~but~~ empirical diversity. This reality is God<sup>1</sup>. "If you regard Him through Him (i.e. if you regard the Essence from the point of view of Essence), then He regards Himself through Himself, which is the state of unity; but if you regard Him through yourself (i.e. from your point of view as a form) then the unity vanishes<sup>2</sup>". Multiplicity is due to different points of view, not to an actual division in the One Essence ('ayn)". Numerous other prose passages can be quoted bearing on the same basic theme on which Ibnul Arabi constructs the imposing structures of his mystical thought spread over thousands of pages, but let us see how he expresses it in verse :

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5      1. Afifi : Mystical philosophy of Ibnul 'Arabi  
(Cambridge) 1939 page 10.

2. Fususqashani commentary, Cairo 1309 A.H.  
Page 147 as per Ibid.  
Ibid page 417.

So Creator is the very ground of creation in this respect, ponder a while!

But in another respect He is not one with his creation, so remember Him.

One who understands what I say will never be lacking insight.

Nobody comprehends it except the man gifted with a vision.

In union or in separation, the Essence is always One. Plurality is His veil and vanishes when He reveals His Glory<sup>1</sup>.

If the Creation submits to you, It means that Creator submits too.

When Haqq submits, Khlq should not be followed

(Jami<sup>2</sup> thinks that Haqq means the State of Union with God and Khlq means separation and gives the following explanation. When we look at the multiplicity (Khālq) it is necessary that we should witness the unity underlying it (Haqq) and when we have thus arrived at the unity we need not care for the multiplicity in which it manifests itself.)

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1. Fass No.4 Page 79 of Fusūs edited by Afifi

2. Jami commentary on Fusus printed in Ferozepore (India) in 1907 page 215.



Trust my words, as my speech is wholly true.  
There is nothing in existence which does not  
possess a tongue to praise Him.

The Real is the Essence of all things seen by eye<sup>1</sup>.

O God ! How it is possible that Thou shouldst  
be known by any one other than Thee ! Is there  
anything in existence save thee?

No, Not at all.

O God ! I do not think myself other than three.  
How can I see an impossibility and be misled<sup>2</sup>.

I wonder at the Existents who embraces all the forms,--  
Of the celestial beings as well as those of the  
genii and the men,  
Including the lower and higher worlds, Animals,  
plants and stones.

They are neither other than Him, nor His Identity.  
But He manifests Himself in every thing He wills.  
He is visible for the sight in respect of His Essence.  
This is not seen by intellect and He is veiled from it.  
For intelligence is ignorant due to the limits of  
thought,

But the imagination discloses Him to the hearing  
and the sight<sup>3</sup>.

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1. Fass No.10 Page 106 of Fusus edited by Afif.

2. Futuhet Vol. I page 160.

3. Divan (Bulaq : 1855) Page 294.

O' the Creator of things within Thyself,  
Thou containest all that<sup>est</sup> Thou GREATEST,  
Thou GREATEST in thee what is limitless,  
Thou art the Narrow and the Spacious<sup>1</sup>.

Ibnul 'Arabis' doctrine of Unity of Being admits of no actual division whatsoever as all multiplicity is caused by our different points of view in relation to our knowledge of it. The divine Essence — which is <sup>that</sup> all exists is the One Universal substance to be identified with Absolute Reality. All the phenomena are nothing but the manifestation of the names and attributes of the divine Essence. Names and attributes are identical with the Essence as a divine. Name is the divine Essence in one of its infinite aspects and a divine Attribute is a divine Name manifested in the external<sup>2</sup> universe. According to Ibnul Arabi, the Attributes have neither any existent a'yan (fixed prototypes), nor any subsistence (as entities), in the divine Essence. They are mere relations and he speaks of them <sup>in</sup> as a metaphorical sense and we should not take them to be anything superadded to the Essence. Here he differs from Ash'arites on their doctrine of Attributes which they ~~was~~ regard as subsisting in and co eternal with God and thus disturb the unity of Being. He even believes in

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1. Fusus, page 88.

the unity of all knowledge — a position quite contrary to that of the Ash'arites.

- <sup>1</sup> God's knowledge of things is One  
<sup>2</sup> Multiplicity is in the known and not in His Essence.

Whereas al-<sup>3</sup> Ash'ari opines and imagines that He,  
Is diversified in respect of His Essence and  
Attributes.

The Reality refuses to accept what he says,  
Although it is a gift of his reflection.

The Truth is evident and 'tis no secret that He  
Is One in respect of His Essence and Attributes

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1. Futuhat Vol. I, Chapter 46, Page 253.

2. Knowledge is relation based upon the known and this known includes you and your conditions. Knowledge does not influence the known, rather the known influences the knowledge as it (known) gives it (knowledge). What it (known) is actually in its essence. (Fusus pages 82-83 of Afif's edition.)

3. Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 324/935).  
Ash'arites, his followers, are named after him.

According to Ibnul 'Arabi this Unity of Being does not mean that God is only immanent in creation. He condemns those who believe in His imminence ~~as well~~ only as well as those who think Him to be absolutely transcendent as God is limited in both cases ! The right attitude for him is to believe that God is both immanent and transcendent.

If you say He is transcendent you confine Him,  
If you assert His imminence you limit Him.  
But if say both the things you are rightly guided,  
And will be the leader and chief of the gnostics.

One who asserts the duality of God and His creation is a polytheist,  
And one who upholds their essential unity is a true monotheist.

If you believe in the separate entity of the creation you should guard yourself against immanence,

If you believe only in God then beware of transcendence

When you see Him simultaneously transcendent and imminent in phenomena you will know that you are both He and not He.

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1. Fass No.3 Page 68 of Afifi's edition.

2. Ibid Page 70.



Although the universe is a manifestation of God but He is best manifested in Man. "When God willed in respect of His Beautiful Names (attributes), which are beyond enumerations, that their essences (a'yan) — or if you wish, you may say "His essence — should be seen, He caused them to be seen in a microcosmic, inasmuch as it is endowed with existence, contains the whole object of vision, and through which the inmost consciousness of God becomes manifested to Him. This He did, because the vision that consists in a things' seeing itself is not like its vision of itself in something else that serves as mirror for it ..... God had already brought the universe into being with an existence resembling that of a fashioned soulless body, and it was like an unpolished mirror.

.....The Divine will (to display His attributes) entailed the polishing of the mirror of the universe. Adam (the human essence) was the very polishing of that mirror, the soul of that form, and angels are some of the faculties of that form, viz., the form of the universe which the Sufis' in their technical language describe as the Great Man .... The aforesaid microcosmic being is named a Man and a Vicegerent (Khalifa). He is named a Man on account of the universality of his organism and because he comprises all realities. Moreover, he stands to God as the pupil (insan), which is the instrument of vision, to eye : and for this reason he is named a Man. By means of him God beheld His Creatures and had

mercy on them. He is Man, the originated (in his body), the eternal (in his spirit); the organism everlasting (in his essence), the word that divides and unites. The universe was completed, by his existence, for he is to the universe what the bezel is to the seal - the bezel whereon is graven the signature that the King seals on his treasures. Therefore He named him a Vicegerent, because he guards the creatures (of God) just as the king guards his treasures by sealing them; and so long as the king's seal remains on them, none dares to open them save by his leave. God made him His Vicegerent in the guardianship of the universe, and it continues to be guarded whilst this PERFECT MAN is there. Dost not thou see that when he shall depart and his seal shall be removed from the treasury of this world, there shall no more remain in it that which God stored in it, but the treasure shall go forth, and every type shall return to its (ideal) entitype, and all existence shall be transferred to the next world and sealed on the treasury of the next world for ever<sup>1</sup>? Such is the essence of the Perfect Man who <sup>u</sup> sums up in himself all that is manifested in the universe. He is the spirit of the universe and Ibnul <sup>Arabic</sup> sings of his glory in the following ode.

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1. Fusus : Fass No.1 Pages 48-50 of Afifis edition (1946).

The Spirit of the Great Existence  
In this small existent  
Where he not there, God would never say,  
I am Great and Omnipotent.  
Let not my transitory state<sup>veil</sup> thee,  
Nor my resurrection after destruction just ponder  
over my reality,  
I am the great and the all - encompassing.  
The Eternal and the temporal  
Are manifested through my essence<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Futuha't (Egypt) Vol.I, Chapter 6, p.118

Compare :

'Tao, 'the way', is unity in change  
and transformation, and the perfect  
revelation of Tao is the man who combines  
the greatest change with the present unity.  
Though Tao is the path, order, and unity  
of everything, it exists in things only  
potentially until it becomes living and  
manifest through its contact with the  
conscious being of the united man. Tao  
appears in man as the uniting force that  
overcomes all deviation from the ground  
of life, as the completing force that  
heals all that is sundered and broken.

Martin Buber, Die Rede, die Lehre, und das field  
(Leipzig : Insel Verlag, 1920), pp. 40-79.

But Ibnul 'Arabi, the humanist, does not confine his verse to the expression of Perfect Mans' state only. He sings of the high destiny of the man in General as the mankind as a whole is a mirror<sup>1</sup> reflecting the beauties of the Creator better than the universe (which is called the Greater Man by the Sufis) does. He chants of the essential identity of the man with God as, according to him, the Creator who is declared to be incomparable is the creatures which are compared with Him -- by reason of His manifesting Himself in their forms - albeit the creatures have been distinguished from the Creator. The plurality consists of relations, which are non - existent things. Although outwardly the Existence seems to be dependent on the triplet of God, Man, and Universe but in reality there is one Essence. The essences ('ayan) of things are in themselves non - existent, deriving what existence they possess from God, who is the real substance of all that exists. This is particularly true of Man who is the image of God.

If He and we<sup>1</sup> were not there,  
Nothing would have existed.  
We are really His slaves,  
And Allah is certainly our Lord.

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1. Qaysari thinks the "we" includes the fixed prototypes ('ay'an) of all the universe and it is not restricted to man only (See page 255 of his commentary on fusus, printed at Bombay 1300 A.H. While Jami thinks that this refers only to Perfect Man. (Af'rad al-Kamilan Min al-ins'an). See page 301 of his already quoted commentary on fusus.



When you call us Men

Then we<sup>1</sup> are His very essence.

Donot be veiled by the nomenclature Man,  
God have granted thee proof (revealed) to  
know that He is thy substance.

Deem thyself God or a creature,

(Thou art in one respect God and in another  
respect a creature. Thou art creator and creature  
at once).

Thou art the manifestation of God's name Ar-Rahman.

Give His Food to His Creatures

Be a source of happiness like the fragrant Rehan

(aromatic plant)

We have given Him in turn of what He had  
bestowed upon us.

(He had given us existence, we have given Him  
Manifestation). He is manifested through us.

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1. This verse and that which follows it  
contains equivocal words and admit of various  
interpretation and the commentators are at  
variance with one another. The two words  
عين and السان mean either the physical  
eye and pupil of the eye or the inward eye and  
the pupil means its inward secret, or they refer  
to the Divine Essence and the Universe.

العين = الذات = انسان = الانسان الكبير  
We (inna) also presents the same ambiguity as  
it may refer to Perfect man or to all men or it  
may mean the whole of creation. Jami thinks  
these verses describe the Perfect man.

So the matter (of existence) is divided between us,  
 Creator is within the creation or the creatures  
 are inside the Creator. Or the bestowed thing is  
 divided in to one part being what the creator  
 gives to the creatures and the other being what  
 the creatures give to Him.

He breathed the life of knowledge into my heart  
 as he knew its nature from eternity just as he  
 bestowed upon me the corporeal existence.

Our beings are embodied in Him,  
 And our essences and durations too are there.  
 We do not receive revelations all times,  
 But only rarely.

There is complete harmony between man and  
 God. They are co-partners in the phenomena of existence  
 and reciprocate each other. Although sufi is conscious  
 of his oneness with God in his short lived unitime  
 state only and his sobriety forces him to face the  
 multiplicity but his conviction in his essential One-ness  
 is never shaken. He still believes in a complete  
 reciprocity and mutual dependence between him and God.

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فیجہدی و احمدہ      وایبندی و اعبدہ  
 ففی حال اقر بہ      و فی الاعیان احمدہ  
 فی حرفی و انکرہ      و اعرفہ فاشہدہ  
 فانی بالفی و انا      اساعبدہ فاسجدہ ؟  
 لذلک الحق ادجدی      فاعلمہ فادجدہ

جاء الحديث لنا وحق في مقصده

1

He praises me (by making me in His own image) and  
I praise Him.

He worships<sup>2</sup> me (in fulfilling my needs) and I  
worship Him.

In one state (unitive life) I acknowledge Him  
But in the multiplicity of 'Ayan I deny Him  
He knows me (always) but (many times) I know Him not.  
How can He dispense with me,  
When I come to His aid and assist Him<sup>3</sup>?  
God has created me so that  
By knowing Him I may create Him (by manifesting his  
names).

As reported by the Tradition,  
In me His object is realised.

This essential oneness of God and man and their  
mutual reciprocity is brought to light by the mystic  
experience. In his state of Fara the mystic realizes his  
essential unity with God. The sufi is dominated by states.

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1. Fars No.4 Fusus Page 83 of Affis' edition.

2. 'Ibadat means 'to serve' as well.

3. Compare :- "you know always in your that you  
need God more than anything; but do you know too  
that God needs you - in the fulness His eternity  
needs you?... You need God in order to be - and  
God needs you for the very meaning of your life...  
The world is not divine sport, it is divine  
destiny. There is divine meaning in the life  
of the world, of man, of human persons, of  
you and of me"  
-- Martin Buber : I and Thou (tr.R.G.Smith),  
Edinburgh, 1950, Page 82.

In the untimely state he is Rabb and when this state passes away he is face\$ his humanity. These two aspects of the man which are sometimes called his 'Lahoot' (Divinity) and Nasoot (humanity) or Rabobiyya (Lordship) and 'Uboodiyya' (slavery) are beautifully expressed in the following lines:-

Sometimes the man (slave) becomes God (Lord)  
without any shadow of doubt,  
And sometimes he is only a man without any  
admixture of Divinity.

When he is man (slave of God) he enjoys  
prosperity (expansion) by God's grace,  
And when he becomes a Lord, his life is spent in  
  straits<sup>1</sup>.

Due to his humanity he sees his real nature,  
And People witness his frailty and their hopes are  
returned to God

In his state of Lordship he finds the creatures  
pressing him for their needs,  
For he is sought by both the earthly and the  
celestial beings.

To grant them what they need is beyond his power,  
That is why you see some gnomes weep in such  
conditions.

Be a man and do not try to be the Lord of men,  
Lest the fire of anxiety for others should burn  
your heart.

1. As the people make demands which he is unable to fulfil.



In this supreme state the saint loses his identity completely and submerges in the ultimate reality. All his acts are attributed to God who becomes his very limbs<sup>1</sup> and sense organs.

I have<sup>2</sup> seen an Existent whom I do not know,  
He is the Existent in whom our 'ayan (fixed prototypes)  
are embodied

My act is shared by God with me,  
As thou may imagine, and this is only a part of the  
story.

I have been listening to an unending dialogue,  
Between us and the Universe, through His mouth.  
I heard it through His hearing<sup>3</sup> because I am  
non-existent,  
And God's attention is all that is needed.

On Him relies he who has no existence himself,  
Some times He e faces him and sometime keeps him intact.  
In symbols have I talked of things unknown,  
To all but the initiated one.

The last verse expresses the incommunicability of mystic experiences — a feeling which is shared by all the mystics. Although they talk a lot about it but they

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1. Refers to the famous tradition.

2. Futuhat i. Makkiyya Vol.4 (Chapter No.422)  
Page 23 Egyptian edition 1329 A.H.

3. Compare Eckharts saying that the eye with which I see God is the same as the eye with which He sees me. (Quoted by W.R. Inge in the introduction (Page 52) of his book, Light, Life and Love

end by saying like St. Bernard, "My secret to myself". They assert that their faltering and inadequate reports are to be understood only by their fellow travellers. But an artist like Ibnul 'Arabi cannot rest content by saying that as he must express what he perceives. He is bound to interpret his supreme vision, his glimpse of the burning bush, to other men by means of symbols. He is the mediator of his brethren, and the divine, for art is the link between appearance and reality. But ineffability is not the only cause for symbolic expression in the case of an artist like Ibnul Arabi who is gifted with supreme mystic genius and has to convey epoch-making revelations about the ultimate Truth. Orthodoxy, is sure to dub his utterances as apostasy. Symbolism is the proper technique for him as it serves the twin purpose.

Behold! Verily the symbols are trustworthy guides,  
To arrive at the meanings hidden in the mind.  
The Universe too has its symbols and riddles for men<sup>1</sup>.  
Without the riddle (ambiguous expression) the  
speech is turned to disbelief,  
And all the worlds are torn with strife  
So he is bound to resort to paradoxes.

God is identical with man, nothing besides him,  
And God is other than man, don't you see.

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1. Futuhat-i-Makkiyya (Egyptian edition, 1329 A.H.)  
Vol. I, Page 189.

But this should not mean that Ibnul Arabi is trying to conceal blasphemous ideas under the garb of mysticism. He is deeply religious and his mystic knowledge springs from a profound study of Quran and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. He has a cosmopolitan outlook and his mind is too great to think narrowly. Consequently his ideas are bound to be unusual and shocking for an ordinary religious man. His doctrine of Unity of Being which combines transcendence with a imminence is according to him based on Quran.

Only God knows Himself, I do not know Him,  
How can He be known when knowledge makes us ignorant  
of Him.

Certainly I know that there is an Existent,  
Unbound by the attribute of Haqq and un-explained  
by that of Khalq.

My bewilderment is the only knowledge I have,  
Our learning does not give us any solid proof.  
Our only resort is what the prophet reported  
About both the states as the faith is sure to  
accept it.

If you deeply reflect over Quran you will see,  
That it sometimes asserts His transcendence  
while at other times declares Him imminent<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Futuhat Vol.4 (1329 A.H.Edition) page 140  
Chapter 503.

Region and mysticism are identical for Ibnul Arabi as the latter is an interpretation of former. He has a lofty ideal for both and wants them to be free from all kinds of frolics and innovation in which only the lower talents may feel happy to indulge.

It is no religion to beat the tambourine, to play  
the flute and frolic,  
The proper study of Quran and respect of God is  
religion.

While listening to the Word of God I am moved,  
Its audition removes the veils (which hide reality).  
Until I see what no eye, save that which witnessed  
light in heavenly books, has ever seen<sup>1</sup>.

Quran and Sunn-ah are the foundations of his mysticism and religion. He does not belong to any religious denomination although his biographers class him as a Zahirite<sup>2</sup> and a follower of Ibn Hazm. He is too great a genius to be a tame imitator of others.

They relate me with Ibn Hazm while I,  
Am not among those who say, <sup>Ibn Hazm</sup> said so and so.  
No, I follow him not, nor anybody else  
I only say, "so runs the Quranic text" that is all I  
know<sup>3</sup>.

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1. Ibid page 279.

2. Maqqari : Nafhuttib Vol.VII (Beirut) Page 363.

3. Divan Page 37.



It seems simply ridiculous to brand a man like him as a (narrow minded) Zaherite who has been influenced by as various systems of thought and beliefs as under :-

- (a) The Quran and Prophet Traditions;
- (b) Earlier Pan theistic Sufis like Sahl Tustri, Hallaj, Bayazid, etc.
- (c) Muslim ascetics;
- (d) Scholastic theologians : Ash'arites and Mu'lazilites.
- (e) Carmathians and Isma'ilians (particularly Ikhwanus Safa)
- (f) The Neoplatonic Aristotelians of Persia : particularly Ibn Sina;
- (g) Ishraqis.
- (h) Hellenistic philosophy, especially Neoplatonism and the philosophy of Philo and the stories on the Logos.
- (i) All the religions of his time including paganism and particularly Christianity and Judaism.

The list is far from being complete. However it is sufficient to show a wide range. A person who comes into contact with such varied ideas and associates with all sorts of people during his lengthy travels is sure to be electric and cosmopolitan. His religion is to be a Universal one which accommodates all. God is manifested in everything around us; all things are sacred. According to Ibnul 'Arabi all forms of beliefs — from the crudest form of idolatry and fetish worship to the most abstract religious philosophy — when rightly interpreted are found to be beliefs about God.

Monotheism and Polytheism are only different paths which lead to the same reality. The polytheist takes one for many and is so lost in the multiplicity and he is unable to see the unity underlying it. Polytheism is due to the failure of the polytheist to realise the unity of the Whole, and due to this defect he regards as divisible the ultimately indivisible Being. "In reality there is no partner of God for He is the essence of everything including the so called partners. Everything that is worshipped is one of His infinite forms and aspects. In fact nothing is worshipped except Him : does He not say "and thy Lord has decreed that thou shalt not worship other than <sup>1</sup>Him", a verse which Ibnul 'Arabi interprets as meaning that "thy Lord has said that nothing is actually worshipped except Him<sup>2</sup>. According to Ibnul Arabi polytheism is not to be rejected if the worshipper of the idols realises a supreme reality behind them and thinks them only to be manifestations of that reality<sup>3</sup>. But often he waives this condition particularly in poetry where he enjoys greater freedom and sometimes he looks favourably on idolatry.

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1. Qura'n XVII - 24.

2. Fusus (ʿArabi) Page 72.

3. Ibid.

A thing may have different predicates and relations,  
But the Essence is one, so look at the cause.  
One who does not see his Creator in idols and arrows,  
Cannot see Him in his mystic vision.  
I did not see any existent I could name,  
Except the Lord of Creation with needs and demand.  
Whenever I pronounced creature, the Creator said,  
"There is nobody there except Me, so do not fear."  
The creation is Creator as He is its very Essence,  
So be steadfast and do not flee as flight is ignorance.

Ibnul 'Arabi thinks that idolatry is planned by the  
divine wisdom itself.

لعل الربود ولو لا سر حكمته  
ما كان يجرد في الخزي وفي اللات

<sup>1</sup>Had it not been for the fact that there is no  
Existent (save God) and were it not for His Secret  
wisdom,  
He would not have been worshipped in the forms of  
Uzzah and al-Lat<sup>3</sup>

He openly declares that idolatry is in reality  
the worship of God.

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1. Fatuhat Vol. IV Page 279.

2-3. Idols worshipped in Arabia in pre-Islamic days.

We continued to worship Him,  
When apparently we worshipped the idols.  
So He did us great favours and was,  
Firmly established in ourselves.  
We had the God in plenty,  
His grace and bounty too.

This liberal and philosophical approach to Polytheism (idolatry) had great influence on the mystics who succeeded Ibnul Arabi. Thus Mahmud Shabistery writes :-

Here idol is the evidence of love and unity,  
Girdle is the binding of the bond of obedience.  
Since infidelity and faith are both based on Being,  
Idol-worship is essentially Unification  
.... If the Musulman did but knew what is faith,  
He would see that faith is idol - worship.  
If the polytheist only knew what idols are,  
How would he be wrong in his religion?  
He sees in idols naught but the visible creature,  
And that is the reason that he is legally a heathen.  
You also, if you see not, "The Truth" hid in the idols,  
In the eye of the law are not a Musulman.  
Infidelity is ever giving praise to "The Truth";  
The text, "All things Praise God," proves it<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Gulshan i Raz (The Mystic Rose Garden) translated by E.H. Whinfield : London (1880) pages 83-84.



Be a true believer, and forsaking the bond of sects,  
Enter the cloister of faith as a christian monk.  
When the vesture of other passes out of sight,  
The cloister becomes to you as a mosque<sup>1</sup>.

According to him the only defect with idolatry, is that it deprives God of His Universality and falls short of realizing His complete nature as being both transcendent and immanent. To worship a god or idol is to show reverence to the partial manifestation of God, but to worship Him in all forms is to worship the Real God. Gnostics alone worship the true God while all others worship one or the other aspect of His Majesty as the former worship Him in all the forms and hold all beliefs to be only partially true. Ibnul Arabi formulates the entire philosophy of his religion in the following verse :

People have formed various beliefs about God,  
And I uphold all their beliefs<sup>2</sup>.

He has an open mind and his heart can accommodate all the beliefs which seem to be at war with each other. Here there is only concord and harmony and it has no room for discord and strife. A Christian monk, an idolator, a Muslim or a Jew — all are welcome.

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1. Ibid Page 91.

2. ~~For more details see the book 'Ibnul Arabi' by Dr. S. M. Naeem, 1961, page 234~~

2. Futuhat Vol. III page 175.

My heart is capable of every form,  
A cloister for the monk, a fane for idols,  
A pasture for gazelles, the pilgrim's K'aba,  
The Tables of Torah, the Koran.  
Love is the faith I hold : wherever turn<sup>1</sup>  
His camels, still one true faith is mine

So Ibnul 'Arabi, like al Hallaj and Suhrawardy Maqtool believes in the transcendental unity of all religions and was luckier to have escaped their fate. Islam for him is not only the religion of Muhammad but the embodiment of all religions and beliefs. Sufis following this line of thought avoid professing any particular creed :

The great mystic poet of the Panjab Bullah Shah says :

بھلا کیہ جانناں میں کوں  
نہیں ہوں دج سیتان  
نہیں ہوں دج کفر دیاں ریتان  
نہیں ہوں دج پلٹیاں  
نہیں ہوں دج پلٹیاں

O Bullah, How can I know what I am,  
Neither am I a believer attached to a mosque;  
Nor am I an infidel.  
I am neither holy nor unholy. 2  
Neither am I Moses nor a Pharoah .

1. Tarjomanul Ashwaq (Beruit), Pages 43-44.

2. Kulliyat (Published by Panjabi Academy) P.44  
Lahore, 1960.



O God within my breast,  
Almighty, ever - present Deity !  
Life - that in me hast rest,  
As I -- undying Life -- have power in Thee;  
Vain are the thousand creeds  
That move men's hearts; unutterably vain;  
Worthless as withered weeds,  
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one  
Holding so fast by thine infinity;  
So surely anchored on  
The stead fast rock of Immortality.  
With wide - embracing love  
Thy Spirit animates eternal years,  
Pervades and broods above,  
changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears<sup>1</sup>.

If everything is essentially divine then Good and Evil are only relative terms, and when man's essence is the same as that of God then punishment is not to be feared because it is not going to be painful<sup>2</sup>. According to Ibnul 'Arabi there is no punishment and reward in the orthodox sense of religion at the time of resurrection

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1. The Oxford - Book of English Mystical Verse  
(1949 Edition) Page 215.

2. Fusus, cit. page 94.



All the creatures will enjoy a blissful state whether they enter the paradise or are led to hell because the blessing is one although it may have different forms i.e., heaven & hell. Thus Ibnul 'Arabi tells us about the people in the hell -

Although the enterents of hell but they,  
There - Taste the blessings which are different,  
From those of paradise, 'tis all the same for them,  
Epiphany makes all difference between them.  
Due to its sweet taste it is called 'Asa'b.

(punishment)

This is only like a husk which protects the kernal.

So these are some of the themes round which Ibnul 'Arabi's mystic thought revolves. His thoughts baffle one who wants to grasp them completely. Even if one goes through all the works of a genius like Ibnul 'Arabi one cannot master his thought. The mystics record only a fraction of their immense knowledge as Ibn 'Arabi himself tells :

تجمل السكين ان علوماً ما بين اوراق الكتاب بسط  
هجات بل ما اردوا اني كتبت الا يسير من احوال نفسي

The poor (scholar thinks that their (mystics') sciences, Are recorded on the papers of the book.

Alas! that which they have deposited in the books, Is but a tiny but of things hard to describe<sup>1</sup>.

1. Mawaqif al Mujaun, Egypt, P.200.

Ibnul Arabi's most poetical verse is picturous to be found in Tarjoma nul Ashwaq. It lays before the reader the most fascinating imagery <sup>o</sup>pr<sub>A</sub>etraying earthly sights like gardens, deserted hillocks, women sitting on camels, beautiful damsels, departing beauties, friendly ladies circumbulating K'aba, queen of Sheba (Bilqis) sitting on her throne, peacocks with murderous glances, a bishopess who is one of the daughters of Rome and a singing dove. All of these lovely images are symbols for mystical realities. Bilqis, for example, stands for Divine Wisdom and the peacocks for good deeds<sup>1</sup>. Thus the collection is a master piece of symbolism in Arabic poetry and a commentary is added to the odes by the author to explain the symbolic meanings of various expressions and words. Even in their outwardly mundane sense the poems are extremely enjoyable as beautiful lyrical odes. When Ibnul Arabi first brought them before his public, these were unaccompanied by any commentary. But the undisguisedly love character, not to say erotic element of the odes, shocked many readers who apparently failed to recognize their true mystical nature. In consequence Ibn 'Arabi brought out a new edition of his poems, accompanied by a new pre face and by the commentaries that, ever since, have formed an integral

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1. As explained by Ibnal Arabi himself in his commentary of Tarjman ul Ashwaq.

part of the volume. His purpose in writing the poems as well as the commentary is given by him in the preface where he writes, 'I came to Mecca in 578 to find there a Group of great scholars ..... none of whom was to be matched with Makinuddin ..... and this Sheik had a, beautiful young and maiden daughter, attractive for the eye and a good conversationalist who was a surprise for the on-lookers. She was called Nizam and surnamed AINU'SH - Shams wal Baha and was renowned for her asceticism and eloquent preaching .... Was it not for the fear of baser selves, easy preys of moral ills and having evil intentions. I would have dwelt upon her physical charms .... she was a sun among the scholars and a garden for the literator.... Her abodes were the mecks and her house was built on the heart and the blackness of eye ..... we observed, in her company, the nobility of her nature .... so we celebrated her in the poems contained in this book, using the limpid language of erotic poem and the befitting expression of a lyrical ode (ghazal) .... But I could not express even a small part of feelings roused by love and past recollections. .... but we have versified some of longings out of these precious treasures. I have given expression to my desiring self and I have hinted at our relations. Keeping in view our old dealings. Whenever I mention a name in this book I always allude to her, and whenever I mourn over an abode I mean her abode. In these poems I always signify Divine influences and spiritual revelations and sublime analogies according to the most excellent way which we

(Sufis) follow .... God forbid that readers of this book and of my other poems should think of such unbecoming to souls that scorn evil and to lofty spirits that are attached to the things of Heaven ! I wrote this commentary on the request of Badr al Habashi and Ismail both of whom had heard some theologians remark that the author's declaration in the preface was not true, his declaration, namely, that the love - poems refer to mystical sciences and realities. 'Probably', said the critic, 'he adopted this device in order to protect himself from the imputation that he, a man famous for religion and piety, composed poetry in the erotic style'. Accordingly I began to write the commentary at Aleppo ..... I have used the erotic style and form of expression because men's souls are enamoured of it, so that there are many reasons why should it commend itself. And every elegant literator makes use of the similar style which is spiritual as well as subtle and I have explained my object in the following verses" :  
We quote a few of these :-

Whenever I mention the ruins of a house,  
Or a place or some abode,  
Or women with rounded breasts and pointed nipples,  
Appearing like suns or statues,  
Whenever I mention what is already well-known  
Or something similar, you should interpret it as,  
Some Divine Secrets or heavenly lights,  
Which the Lord of Heavens brings to my heart<sup>1</sup>.



Ibnul Arabi saw celestial beauty in the mirror of earthly beauty and his love for earthly objects was only an aspect of his love for things divine. This apparent paradox is beautifully explained in Michael Angelas following sonnet :-

I saw no mortal beauty with these eyes  
When perfect peace in thy fair eyes I found;  
But far within, where all is holy ground,  
My soul felt Love, her comrade of the skies :  
For she was born with God in Paradise;  
Else should we still to transient loves be bound;  
But finding these so false, we pass beyond  
Unto the Love of Loves that never dies.

Nay, things that die, cannot assuage the thirst  
O souls undying; nor Eternity  
Serves Time, where all must fade that flourisheth.  
Sense is not love, but lawlessness accurst :  
This kills the soul; while our love lifts on high  
Our friends on earth - higher in heaven  
through death <sup>1</sup>.

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1. J.A. Symonds, Sonnets of Michael Angelas, op.cit;P.57,  
Sonnet No.52.

For any one used to the erotic character of so much in Sufi poetry the mystical content of Ibn 'Arabi's odes will reveal itself without undue difficulty. Yet though the reader may sense the mystical import of the poems, he would not be able to find the true meanings without consulting the commentary. So far as Nizams' (the beautiful maiden he met at Mecca) influence on this poetical collection is concerned, it can be safely avowed that she was to poet what Beatrice was to Dante, --- an embodiment of Divine love and beauty, a symbol and a spiritual ideal

"We can only go astray if we ask, as many have done in connection with the figure of Beatrice in Dante: is she a concrete, real figure or is she an allegory? For just as a divine Name can be known only in the concrete form of which it is the theophany, so a divine archetypal Figure can be contemplated only in a concrete Figure - sensible or imagined - which renders it outwardly & or mentally visible. When Ibn 'Arabi explains an allusion to the young girl Nizam as, in his own words, an allusion to "a sublime and divine, essential and sacrosanct Wisdom (Sophia), which manifested itself visibly to the author of these poems with such sweetness as to provoke in him joy and happiness, emotion and delight," we perceive how a being apprehended directly by the Imagination is transfigured into a symbol thanks to a theophanic light, that is, a light which reveals its dimension of transcendence. From the very first the figure of the young girl was apprehended by the Imagination on a

visionary plane, in which it was manifested as an "apparitional Figure" (surat mithaltya) of Sophia aeterna. And indeed it is as such that she appears from the prologue on<sup>1</sup>.

Sufis are used to see the divine manifested in human form as they believe that the phenomenal is a bridge to Reality "الجاز قنطرة الحقيقة" and it was no innovation of Ibrul Arabi to see divine mysteries revealed through Nizam because this practice had been established long before him and was supported by al-Ghazali. She is not only the inspiration of the odes contained in Tarjuman-al-Ashwaq but some of the poems in Muhadrat al Abrar are also addressed to her.

We shall offer a few of these charming odes with commentary to the readers beginning with the one which mentions Nizam :-

- 1.- My lovesickness is from her of the lovesick eyelids :  
console me by the mention of her console me!
- 2.- The grey dove fluttered in the meadows and wailed :  
the grief of these doves is from that which grieved me.

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1. Henry Corbin ; Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi, London, 1969, P.139.

- 3.- May my father be ransom of a tender  
playful girl, one of the maidens guarded in  
howdahs, advancing swaying among the married  
women!
- 4.- She rose, plain to see, like a sun, and  
when she vanished she shone in the horizon of  
my heart.
- 5.- O ruined abodes at Rama! How many fair damsels  
with swelling breasts have they beheld!
- 6.- May my father and I myself be the ransom of  
a God - nurtured gazelle which pastures  
between my ribs in safety!
- 7.- The fire thereof in that place is light :  
thus is the light the quencher of the fires.
- 8.- O my two friends, bend my reins aside that  
I may see the form of her abode with the  
clear vision.
- 9.- And when ye reach the abode, descend, and there,  
my two companions, weep for me,
- 10.- And stop with me a little while at the ruins,  
that we may endeavour to weep, nay, that  
I may weep in deed because of that which  
befell me.
- 11.- Passion shoots me without arrows, passion slays  
me without a spear.



- 12.- Tell me, will ye weep with me when I weep beside  
her? Help me, oh help me to weep!
- 13.- And rehearse to me the tale of Hind and Lubna and  
Sulayma and Zaynab and 'Inan !
- 14.- Then tell me further of Hajir and Zarud, give me  
news of the pastures of the gazelles!
- 15.- And mourn with me for the poetry of Qays and Lubna,  
and with Mayya and the afflicted Ghaylan !
- 16.- Long have I yearned for a tender maiden, endowed  
with prose and verse ( فـ و ), having a pulpit,  
eloquent,
- 17.- One of the princesses from the land of Persia, from  
the most glorious of the cities, Isfahan.
- 18.- She is the daughter of 'Iraq, the daughter of my  
Inam, and I am her opposite, a child of Yemen.
- 19.- O my Lords, have ye seen or heard that two opposites  
are ever united.
- 20.- Had you seen us at Rama proffering each other  
cups of passion without fingers.
- 21.- Whilst passion caused sweet and joyous words to  
be uttered without a tongue,
- 22.- You would have seen a state in which the understanding  
disappears - Yemen and 'Iraq embracing together.
- 23.- Falsely spoke the poet who said before my time  
(and he has pelted me with the stones of his  
understanding),

24.- 'O thou who gives the Pleiades in marriage to Suhayl, God bless thee ! how should they meet?

25.- The Pleiades are in the north whenever they rise, and Suhayl whenever he rises is in the south.

COMMENTARY :

1.- 'Her of the lovesick~~ed~~ eyelids' : he means the presence desired by ~~h~~ gnostics. Although she is too sublime to be known and loved, she inclines towards them in mercy and kindness and descends into their hearts by a sort of manifestation.

'Console me by the mention of her' : there is no cure for his malady but remembrance. He says 'console me' twice i.e. by my remembrance of God and by God's remembrance of me (Cf. Kor.II,147).

2.- 'The grey doves', i.e., the spirits of the intermediate world.

'And wailed', because their spirits cannot join the spirits which have been released from imprisonment in this earthly body.

3.- 'A tender playful girl', i.e., a form of Divine wisdom, essential and holy, which fills the heart with joy.

'One of the maidens guarded in howdahs' : she is a virgin because none has ever known her before; she was veiled in modesty and

jealousy during all her journey from the Divine Presence to the heart of this gnostic. 'The married woman', i.e., a form of Divine wisdom already realized by gnostics who preceded him.

- 4.- 'And when she vanished', etc., i.e., when she set in the world of evidence she rose in the world of Unseen.
- 5.- 'O ruined abodes', i.e., the bodily faculties. 'At Rama', from (We sought), implying that their search is vain.  
'How many fair damsel's, etc., i.e. subtle and Divine forms by which the bodily faculties were annihilated.
- 7.- The natural fires are extinguished by the heavenly light in the heart.
- 8.- 'The form of her abode', i.e., the presence from which she issued forth. He seems to desire the station of Divine contemplation, since wisdom is not desired except for the sake of that to which it leads.
- 9.- 'Weep for me', because this Presence annihilates everyone who attains unto her and beholds her.
- 10.- 'That I may weep' etc., i.e., for the loss of the loved ones and of every thing except the ruins of their abode.

11.- 'Without arrows', i.e. from a distance.

12.- 'Without a spear', i.e. near at hand.

13.- Hind was the mistress of Bishr, and Lubna of Qays b. al-Dharir; 'Iman was a slave - girl belonging to an - Natiqi; Zaynab was one of the mistresses of Umr b. Ali Rabi'a; Sulayma was a slave-girl whom the author had seen : he says that she had a lover. He interprets the names of all these women mystically, e.g. Hind is explained as an allusion to the Fall of Adam, and Zaynab as signifying removal from the station of saintship to that of prophecy.

14.-

16.- He describes this essential knowledge as endowed with prose and verse, i.e., absolute in respect of her essence, but limited in respect of possession. 'A pulpit', i.e. the ladder of the Most Beautiful Names. To climb this ladder is to be invested with the qualities of these Names. 'Eloquent', referring to the station of apostleship. The author adds : I allude enigmatically to the various kinds of mystical knowledge which are under the veil of an-Nizam, the maiden daughter of our Shaykh'.

17. 'One of the princesses', on account of her asceticism, for ascetics are the kings of the earth.

18. Iraq indicates origin, i.e., this knowledge comes of a noble race.



'A child of Yemen', i.e. in respect of faith and wisdom and the breath of the Merciful and tenderness of heart. These qualities are the opposite of what is attributed to Iraq, viz., rudeness and severity and infidelity, whereas the opposite of Iraq itself is not Yemen, but the Maghrib, and the opposite of Yemen itself is not Iraq, but Syria. The anti thesis here is between the qualities of the Beloved and those of the lover.

19.-'Two opposites', referring to the story of Junayd, when a man sneezed in his presence and said, 'God be praised!' (Kor. 1, 1) Junayd said, completing the verse, 'Who is the Lord of created things'. The man replied, 'And who is the created being, that he should be mentioned in the same breath with God?' 'O my brother', said Junayd, 'the phenomenal, when it is joined to Eternal, vanishes and leaves no trace behind. When He is there, thou art not, and if thou art there, He is not@'.

22.-'Yemen and Iraq', etc., i.e., the identification of the qualities of Wrath and Mercy. He refers to the saying of Abū Sa'id al-Kharrāz, who on being asked how he knew God, answered, 'By His uniting two opposites, for He is the First and the Last and the Outward and the Inward'.

(Kor. 'VII, 3).

24.- 'The Pleiades', i.e., the seven attributes demonstrated by scholastic philosophers.

'Suhayl', i.e. the Divine Essence.

25.- 'In the north', i.e., in the world of phenomena. The Divine attributes are manifested in Creation, but the Div-ine Essence does not enter into creation<sup>1</sup>.

1.- O doves that haunt the ara'k and ban trees,  
have pity!

Do not double my woes by your lamentation!

2.- Have pity ! Do not reveal, by wailing and weeping, my hidden desires and my secret sorrow!

3.- I respond to her, at eve and morn, with the plaintive cry of a longing man and the moan of an impassioned lover.

4.- The spirits faced one another in the thicket of ghada' trees and bent their branches towards me, and it (the bending) annihilated me;

5.- And they brought me divers sorts of tormenting desire and passion and untried affliction.

6.- Who will give me sure promise of Jam<sup>2</sup> and al Muhassab of Mina? Who of Dha't al-Athl ?

7.- They encompass my heart moment after moment, for the sake of love and anguish, and kiss my pillars.

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1. Tarjuman al Ashwaq, Beirut, 1961, Pp.78-86.

8.- Even as the best of mankind encompassed the Ka'ba, which the evidence of Reason proclaims to be imperfect.

9.- And kissed stones therein, although he was a Natiq (prophet)<sup>1</sup>. And what is the rank of the Temple in comparison with the dignity of man?

10- How often did they vow and swear that they would not change, but one dyed with henna does not keep oaths.

11- And one of the most powerful things is a veiled gazelle, who points with red finger tips and winks with eyelids,

12- A gazelle whose pasture is between the breast - bones and the bowels. O marvell! a garden amidst fires!

13- My heart has become capable of every form : it is a pasture for gazelles, a cloister for the monk,

14- A fane for idols, the pilgrims' K'aba, The Tables of the Torah, the Koran.

15- I follow the faith of love : Where turn His camels, still the one true faith is mine.

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1. In the Ismai'li system Muhammad, regarded as an incarnation of Universal Reason, is the Natiq of the Seventh prophetic Cycle. Brownes, Literary History of Persia I 408 seq.

- 16- We have a pattern in Bishr, the lover of Hind and her sister, and in qays and Lubna, and in Mayya and Ghaylan.

COMMENTARY

- 1.- 'O doves', i.e., the influences of holiness and purity.

- 3.- I respond to her i.e., I repeat to her what she says to me, as God said to the soul when He created her, 'Who am I?' and she answered, 'Whom am I?' referring to her qualities, where-upon He caused her to dwell four thousand years in the sea of despair, indigence and abasement until she said to Him, 'Thou art my Lord'.

- 4.- 'Faced one another', because love entails the union of two opposites.

In the thicket of ghada trees i.e., the fire of love.

Branches i.e., flames

'Annihilated me' in order that He alone might exist, not I, through jealousy that the lover should have any existence in himself apart from his beloved.

- 6.- Jam' i.e. the union with the loved ones in the station of proximity which is al Muzdalifa.

Al Muhassah', the place where the thoughts which prevent lovers from attaining their



object of desire are cast out.

Dhat al Athl, referring to the principle ( اصل )  
for it is the principle in love that thou shouldst  
be the very essence of Thy Beloved and shouldst  
disappear in Him from thy self.

'Na'man the place of Divine and holy bliss ( نعم )

7.- 'For the sake of love and agtāst, i.e., in order  
to inspire me with passion.

'And kiss my pillars' (properly, kiss over the  
litham or veil covering the mouth), i.e., he is  
veiled and unable to behold them except through  
a medium ( واسطه ). The pillars are the four  
elements on which the human constitution is based<sup>1</sup>.

10- 'One dyed with henna' : he refers to sensual  
influences ( دورات نفسیه ), such as descended  
on soul when God, addressed it and said, "Am I not  
your Lord?" (Kor. vii, 171), and received from it  
a promise and covenant. Then it did not faithfully  
keep the station of unification ( التوحید ), but  
followed other Gods. No one was exempt from this  
polytheism, for every one said, 'I did' and  
'I said', at the time when he forgot to contemplate  
the Divine Agent and Speaker within him.

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1. The author leaves the next two verses,  
unexplained 'The best of mankind is Muhammed'.

- 11- 'A veiled gazelle', i.e. a Divine subtlety ( لغيف ) veiled by a sensual state ( حالة نفسية ), in reference to the unknown spiritual feelings ( احوال ) of gnostics, who cannot explain their feelings to other men : they can only indicate them symbolically to those who have begun to experience the like.

'With red finger-tip' : he means the same thing as he meant by 'one dyed with henna' in the last verse.

'And winks with eye-lids' : i.e. the speculative proofs concerning the principles of gnostics are valid only for those who have already been imbued with the rudiments of this experience. Gnostics, though they resemble the vulgar outwardly, are Divine ( ربا شرون ) inwardly.

- 12- 'Whose pasture', etc as Ali said, striking his breast, 'Here are sciences in plenty, could I but find people to carry them (in their minds)'.

'A garden amidst fires', i.e. manifold sciences which, strange to say, are not consumed by the flames of love in his breast. The reason is, that these sciences are produced by the fires of seeking and longing, and therefore, like salamander, are not destroyed by them.

- 13- 'My heart has become capable of every form', as another has said, 'The heart ( القلب ) is so

called from its changing ( قلبه ) for it varies according to various influences by which it is affected in consequences of the variety of its states of feeling ( احوال ); and the variety of its feelings is due to the variety of the Divine manifestations that appears to its utmost ground ( سبب ). The religious law gives to this phenomenon the name of transformation ( التحول والتبدل في الصور ).

'A pasture for gazelle', i.e., for the objects of his love.

'A covenant for christian monks' : inasmuch as he makes the loved ones to the monks, he calls the heart a covenant.

14- 'A temple for idols i.e. for Divine Realities which men seek and for whose sake they worship God.

'The pilgrims K'aba', because his heart is encompassed by exalted spirits.

'The tablets of the Tora, i.e., his heart is a table on which are inscribed the Mosaic sciences that have accrued to him.

'The book of the Koran', because his heart has received an inheritance of perfect Mohammadan Knowledge.

15- 'I follow the religion of Love', in reference to the verse, 'Follow me, then God will love you'

'Whatever way Loves' camels take', etc.,  
I accept willingly and gladly whatever burden  
he lays upon me. No religion is more sublime  
than a religion based on love and longing for  
Him whom I worship in whom I have faith'. This  
is a peculiar prerogative of Moslems, for the  
station of perfect love is appropriated to  
Muhammad beyond any other prophet, since God  
took him as His beloved.

- 16- He says, 'Love qua' love, is one and the same  
reality to those Arab lovers and to me, but the  
objects of our love are different, for they  
loved a phenomenon, whereas I love the Essential'.  
'We have a pattern in them', because God only  
afflicted them for the love of human beings like  
themselves in order that He might show, by means  
of them, the falseness of those who pretend to  
love Him and yet feel no such transport and  
rapture in loving Him as deprived those enamoured  
men of reason and made them, unconscious of  
themselves<sup>1</sup>.

We have not mentioned so far the form of his  
poetry which is most famous of all his verse in the  
east. Ibmul Arabi did not confine himself to the

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1. Ibid, Pp. 40 - 44.



conventional ode but wrote in unsophisticated and humbler forms as well. We mean to allude to his muwashshahat and Zajal which were in his days the favourite type of folk - songs. Both forms were invented in Spain, and their structure is very similar, consisting of several stanzas in which the rhymes are so arranged that the master - rhyme ending each stanza and running through the whole poem like a refrain is continually interrupted by a various succession of subordinate rhymes. The only difference between a Muwashshahat and Zajal is that the former is more sophisticated and ornate than the latter and the ode is more sophisticated than both of them. Although Ibnul Arabi tried all the forms but his Muwashshahs which are of course mystic are most famous of all. We quote one which is regarded as his best:

The secrets of a'yan<sup>1</sup> appeared over the  
existences for the onlookers.

The distressed lover is in a critical state,  
as he is moaning.

He says, while the ecstasy has weakened him and  
distance has perplexed him, "When the distance  
was caused, I did not know after that who changed  
Him". The slave (man) was bewildered by Divine  
love and the Unique One informed him both

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1. As he is looking on the a'yan of the  
existents and neglects the Divine Essence.

secretly and openly (in the worlds) saying,  
"I am the Rewarder (Judge), O'thou the worshipper  
of the idols, thou niggardly one!

All Love is difficult for one who complains of  
the degradation of being veiled.

O', one having a heart, if thou hadst cleansed  
it during thy youth, Lord would have brought it  
near unto Him - but no, this is a lie, let us repent.

And call, 'O compassionate one, the Just and the  
Bountiful, I am grieved, the separation has  
weakened me and no friend or helper is nearby.

I am lost in God and separated from all that  
the eye can see.

I was stationed in a dignified place and cried,  
'where is where '?' in Him.

Then He said, "Have ye ever seen the essence  
exactly (or with His eye).

Did ye not see Ghaylan<sup>1</sup>, qays<sup>2</sup> and other passing  
away. They say that love is the king. The man  
afflicted by its

to x everything other than the beloved and love  
becomes his habit (religion)".

How many times he said, "I am one who loves,  
who be I? I do not complain nor do I see anything  
except annihilation (Fana).

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1, 2.- Arab tribes.

I am not such as leaves his beloved if he does  
him any wrong, and forgets him. Such a behaviour  
is scandalous for gnostics. Ask them what they  
saw in Divine presence to falsify the reports  
of the liars

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I entered the garden of friendship and  
nearness and the myrtle greeted me playfully  
in its fine brocade.

I am the same, O man, loving and obedient  
in His company.

Paradise ! O' Paradise ! I pluck jasmine  
from the garden and the compassionate one has  
made myrtle lawful for His lovers<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Divan Page 85 - 86; also in Nafh at Tib  
of Maqqari. Only the first stanza of the  
text is ~~given~~<sup>help</sup> quoted. However translation  
of the whole is recorded.

سائر الاميان      لاقت على الاكون      دننا نرس  
والحاشق الخزان      من ذات في بحران      بيدي الالين  
يقول دالاجه      افنا ه' دالبه      قد هيره

IBNU'L - FARID :

Ibnul - Farid is not only the greatest and the finest poet of all who wrote mystic poetry but has also been acknowledged as one of the major poets of Arabic language. He is a supreme master of symbolistic style of the sufis in which Ibnul 'Arabi, a great theosophist rather than a great poet excelled<sup>1</sup>. Although an eminent

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Sharafuddin 'Umar Ibnul Farid, a native of Cairo, was born seventeen years after Ibnul Arabi and died five years before him (A.D. 1182-1235/A.H. 576 - 632). As his name declares he was the son of a notary (Farid). In his youth he practised religious austerities on Mount Muqattam near Cairo, returning at intervals to attend the law courts with his father and study theology. One day he encountered a saint in the guise of an old greengrocer who told him the hour of his illumination was at hand, but that he must go to the Hijaz to receive it. Accordingly Ibnul Farid set out for Mecca, where the promise was fulfilled. After fifteen years' absence from Egypt he heard the voice of the saint, who was then on his death-bed, bidding him return to Cairo to bury him. Ibnul Farid obeyed and having performed this pious duty settled in Cairo for the rest of his life, lodging in the mosque al Ashar, as his father had done. Two sons of the poet were invested with the Khirqa by the famous sufi, Shihabuddin Abu Hafs 'Umar al-Suhrawardi on the occasion of his meeting with Ibnul Farid at Mecca in A.D. 1231.

1.- See his Tarjuman al Ashwaq.



sufi he was basically a poet who had studied his craft profoundly and had the genius to handle it with surprising ease. Rhetorical devices and fantastic conceits are a general and obvious features of Ibnul Farid's style, a feature popularized by Bashshar bin Burd, perfected by Ibnul Mu'tazz and brought into prominence by Mutanabbi since whose time it had maintained itself not merely a local or temporary fashion but with all the force of a fixed and almost universally accepted tradition. Instead of deviating from this tradition and the practice of his contemporaries Ibnul Farid mastered it. It is nothing short of a miracle that such an ornate style should have touched the deepest chords of the hearts of so many generations and it is entirely due to his mysticism that he saved his poetry from the worst excesses of rhetorics. 'If his verse abounds in fantastic conceits,

if much of it is enigmatic to the last degree, the conceits and enigmas are not, as a rule, rhetorical ornaments or intellectual conjuring tricks, but like tendrils springing from a hidden root are vitally connected with the moods of feeling which they delineate. It may be difficult to believe, what is related on the testimony of his most intimate friends, that he used to dictate his poems at the moment when he came out of a deep ecstatic trance, during which "he would now stand, now sit, now repose on his side, now lie on his back, wrapped like a dead man; and thus would

he pass ten consecutive days, more or less, neither eating nor drinking, nor speaking nor stirring". His style and diction resemble the choicest and the finest jewel - work of a fastidious artist rather than the first fruits of divine inspiration. Yet I am not inclined to doubt the statement that his poetry was composed in the abnormal manner. The history of mysticism records numerous instances of the kind. Since the form of such automatic composition will largely depend on materials stored within the mystics' brain, and on the literary models with which he is familiar, we need not be surprised if his visions and revelations sometimes find spontaneous utterance in an elaborately artificial style. The intense passion and glowing rapture of Ihsaul Farid's poetry are in keeping with this account of the way in which they were produced<sup>1</sup>. But the possibility that he might have written his poetry while not under ecstasy cannot be excluded as Words worth who himself a mystic suggests writes, "Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic

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1. Nicholson : Studies in Islamic Mysticism  
Pages 167-168.

sensibility, had also thought long and deeply<sup>1</sup>.

It is but obvious that Ibnul Farid studied the poetic<sup>art</sup> thoroughly. He seems to be especially influenced by Mutanabbi from whom he learnt all the important tricks of the trade. One of his odes<sup>2</sup> is in effect composed in emulation of a poem by Mutanabbi using the same and same rhyme and bearing other resemblances. His fondness for diminutives is also due that giant's influence although Ibnul Farid uses them more frequently. In fact no writer has used diminutives so abundantly. Nearly every verse of the first ode<sup>3</sup> (of one fifty one verses) contains a diminutive and the rhyme is usually a diminutive. Besides, this excessive use of diminutives the following rhetorical figures may be enumerated among the principal ones<sup>4</sup> employed by him.

(1) Jinas. This figure, also called tajnis, consists in using in close proximity two words having the same root letters but with different meanings. It is sub-divided into numerous varieties.

(a) al - Tamm : Complete correspondence

1. Preface to the Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads

2. Its opening verse is مے جی نظر سی سناں لما ذ ا

د حوائک صارت قلبی منہ جزا

3. Opening line is سائق الاطمان بلکوی البید طی

(b) al-mukhtalif (al - naqis) : the two words differ in their vocalisation

(c) al-Mulaffaq : one of the two elements is made up of two distinct words although of similar sounds.

(d) Ishtiqaq : two words derived from the same root

Some times he brings together different kinds

of Jins in a single verse :

فَدَأَتْ الْهَوَىٰ أَهْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ هَذِهِ عَلَى الْوَدَّازِ غَنَّتْ غَنَّتْ

This verse contains three kinds of Jins, namely, Jins al-tamm, Jins al naqis and Jins al Shihb al Mushtaq (two words apparently but not actually derived from the same root+1).

- 2.- Tibaq. This figure consists in mentioning two words of opposite meanings in the same line.
- 3.- Muqabala. A pair of contrasting ideas elaborated in balanced compound.
- 4.- Tarsi'. Internal rhymes (saj') exactly corresponding in rhythm.
- 5.- Muwa'zana : Internal rhymes with the final pair not quite rhyming.
- 6.- Muta'ama. Balance between pairs of phrases.
- 7.- Reddal - 'ajs'ala''l-sadr : The line ends with same word or phrase as that with which it opens :



- 8.- Husnal - ta'til. Ingenious assignment of cause.
- 9.- Tajahul al-'arif. Feigned ignorance : the rhetorical question :
- 10.- Muba'lagha : Hyperbole :

These examples of the rhetorical devices with all their minute refinements could be quoted at in plenty for Ibnul Farid's poetry abounds in them. His Diwa'n is a miracle of literary accomplishment, yet the form would be cold without the glow of the spirit which it enshrines. It is the burning passion under-lying it which gives it vitality and powerful expression.

His poetry is animated by his deepest feelings and touches those of his readers.

Where eyes encounter souls in battle - fray,  
I am the murdered man whom 'twas no crime to slay.  
At the first look, ere love in me arose,  
To that all glorious beauty I was vowed.  
God bless a racked heart crying,  
And lids that passion will not let me close,  
And ribs worn thin,  
Their crookedness wellnigh to straightness shaped  
By the glow within  
And seas of tears whence I had never escaped  
But for the fire of sighing!

How sweet are melodies which hide  
Me from myself, my loyal proofs to Love!  
Though after weeful eve came weeful dawn,  
It could not move  
Once to despair my spirit : I never cried  
To Agony, "Be gone"!  
I yearn to every heart that passion shook,  
And every tongue that love made voluble,  
And every deaf ear stopped against rebuke,  
And every lid not dropped in slumbers dull.  
Out on a love who hath no melting eyes!  
Out on a flame from which no rapture flies<sup>1</sup>!

Even a casual glance at his poetry convinces one of his deep-rooted love. His tone is of a true lover inspired and yearning for the beloved. Every word he writes bears testimony to the fact that his heart is all aflame with love. Many of his poems have the attraction of extremely touching lyrics (ghazals) written by a lover with the extreme agony of love and can be enjoyed even by those who have nothing to do with mysticism. Such is the ode sending in word 'fa' sung by divine and profane lovers alike.

تدلی یحیٰ بنی بانگ متلفی      ردی فدات عرفتم الم لم تعرف  
لم اقرض حق حواء ان كنت الذی      لم اقرض نیه اسی دشمنی من یفی  
مالی سوی ردی رباذل نفسه      فی حب من یبقواہ لیس من یسرف

فأنت مرصيت بها فقد استعفتني يا خيبة المسحى إذا لم تعرف  
يا ما لي طيب المنام وما لي ثوب السقام به وجرى المتلف  
عطفاً على مرصتي إذا البقيت لي من سبي المرضي وقلبي المدلف  
فأوجد باقي والوصول بما طي والدبرنان واللقاء مستوحى  
لم أخل من حسد عليك ولا تفرح سهرى بتشيخ الجنال المرحف  
وأسأل نجوم الليل صل راكركى حفى وكيف يزور من لم يعرف  
لا غرد ان شئت إرض جنونا عيني ورحمت بالدموع الذرف

- 1.- My heart whispers to me that thou art destroying me (O may my spirit thy ransom be!), whether thou art aware of this or no.
- 2.- I have not discharged the due of my passion for thee, if I should be one who does not of grief therein; yet truly my like is faithful to pay in full.
- 3.- Naught else have I but my spirit to yield; and he that expends his soul for the love of him he adores, no spendthrift is he;
- 4.- And if thou art graciously pleased to receive it, thou shalt have accomplished my utmost need; alas, for my wasted endeavour, if thou assist me not in this.
- 5.- O thou who deniest me the sweetness of slumber, bestowing on me the robe of sickness because of him, and of this my destructive passion,

- 6.- Show thy compassion upon my remnant of life, and  
this thou hast left to me of my languid body and  
weighed-down heart.
- 7.- For my anguish continues ever, and the hope of  
attainment is still deferred to me; my endurance  
comes to an end, and the longed-for meeting postponed  
to me yet.
- 8.- I am not free of envy because of thee; waste not  
my nightly vigils with alarming phantoms telling of  
hideous things.
- 9.- Or ask the stars of night if slumber has visited  
mine eyelid : how indeed should sleep visit me,  
who am all unknown to it.
- 10.- No marvel it is, if mine eye grudges to close its  
lids, but pours forth abundantly the gushing  
tears :
- 11.- For I swear by the pain of separation I knew when  
I stood to bid farewell, truly I have witnessed  
the terror of that Last Standing<sup>1</sup>.

The ode, beginning with this plaintive note maintains  
its pathetic tone till the end and nowhere lapses into  
a bathos. We may summarize the themes of the remaining

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1. Divan, op. cit. Page 151.



forty verses. The poet is yet content with the delay with which his beloved plagues him (verses 12-13). After a brief transitional reference to the breeze (verses 14-15), he announces his second subject : he thinks of the friends he knew of old, no doubt the saints about Mecca, to whom he vows undying loyalty. After advising other sufferers from passion the poet embarks on a long and most eloquent description of his love. The poem ends on a note of ecstatic joy.

Thus his poems, largely homogenous in character, have love as their central theme. They are cast in the form of a lover's yearning for reunion with his beloved. This was the theme of the 'Udhri poets who of course wrote about profane love. Ibn al 'Arif spiritualizes it in order to express mystics ardent quest for re-union, first with the earthly places which once knew the tread of the prophet Muhammad and with those friends of long ago whom the poet met there on his former pilgrimage, and then with the Spirit of Muhammad itself, the First Epiphany of the Godhead and finally with God Himself. There are only two ways in which he expresses this yearning for union. The one is that of direct solicitation with the beloved as employed in the ode we have just examined. The other is the method of communication through a messenger who is usually a person proceeding towards the abode of the beloved

and sometimes he is a driver of the camel to the place of love as in the ode beginning with the following verse shows :-

سائق الاطمان يلهي ابسيدطي      سنجاع ج علي كشبان طي

(Driver of the camel - train, rolling up the desert, of thy goodness turn aside at the sand-hills of Tai.)

Ibnul Farid's symbolism consists in spiritualizing the profane. The ode expresses all that we meet with in a secular ode but here the feelings and ideas are to be interpreted in a spiritual way. They are symbols of things divine and are meant to express mystic experiences. It will be of some value to quote Nabulasis interpretation of the afore-going verse as it would throw some light on the symbolism. According to him the "driver" signifies God, and camel - train means the people at large. The use of the word driving instead of leading ( قود ) is to denote that they are goaded on the way of union with great force. Sand-hills of Tai means the stations of Mohammad as they are as numerous as the atoms of sand. Tai also means that he aspires for the stations of his teacher, Muhyiddin Ibnul Arabi, from whom he received mystic knowledge, and who was a descendent of Hatim Tai :Such is Nabulasis' interpretation of the symbolism and he explains all other verses of all the odes in the

similar manner. It would be interesting to study all such interpretations as they will reward us with a good fund of mystical information. While such analysis may be helpful for understanding the full significance of the poetry, it is not going to reveal much. We have to learn to use such commentaries discreetly because following them too closely will hamper with our appreciation of the poetry. The commentators are in a mood to handle the text like philologists and try to fasten precise mystical signification upon each and every word. At this point we should beg their leave and try to understand the text independently, as of course, we should know as to when to depend and when to be independent. The commentators, being sufis, share the mystical experiences with the poet but in their zeal to point out the significance of every phrase they may err in some of the details. We can learn from them the main drift of the allegory, and that is sufficient for the appreciation of the verse. The odes as they are retain the form, conventions, topics, and images of ordinary love-poetry : their inner meaning hardly ever obstrudes itself, although its presence is everywhere suggested by a strange exaltation of feelings, fine-drawn phantasies, mysterious obscurities of diction and subtle harmonies of sounds. It is mainly due to this symbolism and mysticism which attach a magic charm to his poetry that Ibnul Farid is counted

among the major poets of Arabic language. There are three themes of his poetry namely : the expression of intense love; the longings and yearnings for Hijaz and the praise of wine. These themes were handled by his predecessors, some of whom were great masters, in various ways. Ibnul Farid could not encell them in their respective fields. It was not easy to emulate Jameel or 'Abbas bin Ashnaf in the description of profane love and it was equally hard to compete with Abn Nuwas in Khamriyyat (wine songs). Sharif Radi was the past master of poems written about Hijaz (Hijaziyyat). If Ibnul Farid has written attractive poetry bearing on these themes, the credit goes to his mystical symbolism which gives his verse a distinctive note.

Without the ardour of a sufi it was not possible to write anything about Hijaz comparable in value to what Sharif had written on the same theme. Some of the finest passages are inspired by the author's recollection of the years spent in the sacred territory near about Mecca.

'O dwellers in the torrent - bed, is there any  
returning for me, whereby I may live once more,  
O dwellers in the torrent - bed?

Alas for my grief! The time is gone to waste,  
and I have not won to any meeting with you,  
dear people of my love.



By your life I swear, O people of Mecca  
(and that is for me a most solemn oath) my  
bowels are deeply stirred with passion for you;  
Love for you has become my profession among men,  
and ardent desire for you my religion, and the  
bond of affection.

My affection is turned to those who dwell nigh  
the Sacred House, and the inhabitants of those tents,  
and the visitors of sandy valley — bottom,  
and the youths of the verdant sanctuary, and the  
neighbours of the impregnable quarter.

And they are dwelling in my heart, though their  
abode be far removed from me; and they are the  
very essence of all my discontent in passion,  
yea, and of my satisfaction. And now I picture  
how once I had my place among them at al-  
Akhshaban, going about my enclosure,

And how I embraced my companions, greeting them  
with a nod as I kissed the corner of the Kaaba.  
Succour me, my brother, and sing to me the tale  
of them that dwell by torrent — bed,  
if thou wilt keep a brother's faith with me.

And repeat it to my ears; for when the interval  
is far, the spirit is rejoiced to receive tidings;  
And if it be that the injury sprung of much  
suffering occupies my heart, yet the sweet odour  
of the fresh herbs of Hijaz shall prove my cure.

What, shall I be driven away from coming down  
to drink of the sweet waters in that land?

And shall I be turned aside there-from, seeing  
that in its crystal purity alone is my hope of  
survival?

And its abodes are my desire, yea, its Spring  
is my joy, and the disperser of the dearth of  
heavy hardship;

And its mountains are for me a Spring - lodgement,  
and its sands are for me an abundant pasturage,  
and its shades are my shelter from the burning sun;  
And its soil is my fragrant nadd, and its water  
is my abundant place of refreshment, and its earth  
is all my wealth;

And its mountain - clefts are for me a garden,  
and its domes are for me a covering, and upon  
its Saff is my happiness and peace of mind.

May the rain greet those dwelling - places and  
hills, and may the second shower of Spring give  
drink to those homes of all blessings:

And may it give drink to the places where the  
holy rites are observed, and the pebble-strewn  
hill of Mina', in copious fall, and may it give  
abundantly to the halting-places of the lean,  
weary camels.

And may Almighty God preserve there my dear

companions, with whom I once conversed at evening upon the gathering - places of the passions; And may He preserve the memory of those nights we spent together at al-Khaif, that were naught but a dream which passed at waking as out of a light slumber.

Alas for that time, and all the joys contained in the sweet perfume of that place when the watchmen were all unheeding :

Days when I pastured in the broad fields of desire, jealously strutting abroad in the trailing skirts of plenty.

How very marvellous are the days, that shower gifts upon a youth, and thereafter torment him by robbing him of all dower!

Ah, is there any returning, if but for a single day, of what is past of our life, that thereafter I may gladly render up all my remaining years?

Alas! the endeavour has proved in vain, and the loops of the cord of desire are broken, and loosed the knot of my hope :

And enough of torment it is, that I should ever pass the night distraught, my ardour before me still beckoning me, and fate unchangeable standing behind me<sup>1</sup>.

In his poems about Hejaz he alludes to the different places by naming them which gives concreteness and reality to the situation besides displaying his sense of poetic value of the proper names. The place names against the description of the nature in desert - valleys, green, dunes, hills, sand - slope, a ripe berries, myrtle - boughs - bring a wealth of fascinating associations. This picture is made all the more charming by his mentions of female names which denote the traditional beloveds of the profane poets. The very word Layla and Sulayma are enough to create romance but the poet adds to it by mentioning un-named damsels with shy looks.

Is it the flash of lightening shining over the  
hollow lands,  
Or Layla lifted the veils that hid her lovely face?  
Or is it the burning fire of Ghaza, while  
Salma is staying at Dhu Ghaza?  
Has she smiled that my glowing tears  
copy the gleam of her pearly teeth?  
Is it the fragrance of Khuzama or the sweet  
smell of Hajir spreading in Mecca?  
Or 'Azza has sprinkled her scent x every - where.  
Or that I knew whether Sulayma is dwelling in  
the valley of the demense, where the bonds-man of  
love is crazed!



Hath thunder crashed with burning showers at La'la,  
and hath rain gushing from the clouds flooded it?

And shall I come down to the waters of al -  
'Udhayb and Hajir,

Openly, when the mystery of night is declared  
by dawn?

And are there green dunes in the camping -  
place at al - Wa'sa ? and

Will the joy that passed there ever return ?

And, O ye dear folk at al-Naqh, is there in the  
hills of Najd any

One that relates me, to show forth what my  
ribs enclose?

And one sand-slope of Sal 'do they ask /knews of  
rept lover at Kasima and say,  
"How is passion dealing with him?"

And are blossoms being called from the myrtle-boughs  
and

in the d' Hijaz are there mimosas with ripe berries?

And the tamarisks at the bend of the vale,  
are they fruitful and

are the eyes of spiteful Time asleep to them?

And are there fair women at 'Alij looking  
shly with large eyes,

as I knew them once, or is it a vain thing?

And did the gazelles of the two meadows remain  
there a little  
while after us, or did something not let them stay?  
And will girls at el Chuway<sup>1</sup> show me where dwells  
my Nu'm<sup>1</sup> in  
Spring? — how pleasant are those dwelling places!  
And is the shade of yew-willow east of Derij  
still spread wide? —  
for my tears have watered it.  
And is Shi'b 'Amir prospering since we departed,  
and will it one  
day bring the lovers together?  
O'Umma Malik, do the dear Arabs intend  
to visit the House of Allah? —  
their favours are all treasured in my memory<sup>2</sup>.

Ibnul Farid does not restrict himself to naming one particular female beloved. He mentions all the beauties whose praises have been sung by other bards for the obvious reason that God's epiphany is not confined to any single object with the exclusion of others as He is manifested in everything. We may or may not agree with Nabulsi<sup>1</sup> when he explains the House

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1. Nu'm is also the name of girl loved by the famous poet of Umayyad period 'Umar b. Ibi Rabi'ah + 719 A.D.

2. Diwan Pp. 166 - 168.

of Allah to mean the heart of the gnostic in the last verse, but we can declare with him with all the force of conviction that "in every erotic description, whether the subject thereof be male or x female, and in all imagery of gardens, flowers, rivers, birds and the like he refers to the Divine Reality manifested in phenomena themselves". This criticism is based on the textual study of the poet. Indeed, it is the favourite mood of Ibnul <sup>Farid</sup> to see his beloved in every -thing that exists. He views Him in the flash of lightning, in the melodies of the lute, in meadows where the gazelles roam, in the cool of mornings and evenings, in the rain falling on the carpet of flowers and even in the blame of the railer.

Though he begone, mine every limb beholds him  
In every charm and grace and loveliness :  
In music of the lute and flowing reed  
Mingled in consort with melodious airs;  
And in green hollows where in cool of eve  
Gazelles roam browsing, or at break of morn  
And where the gathered clouds let fall their ~~own~~ rain  
Upon a flowery carpet woven of blooms  
And where at dawn with softly-trailing skirts  
The zephyr brings to me the balm most sweet;  
And when in kisses from the flagon's mouth  
I suck wine - dew beneath a pleasant shade<sup>1</sup>.

Ibnul Farid has used the masculine gender for his

un-named beloved while some times he does use the feminine gender for the same. It is significant that he uses the masculine gender more often than its opposite one. many passages expressing passionate love are addressed to the male. This is obviously due to his consciousness of the gender usually applied to the Deity enjoy his poetry as both ways. But the poet is equally admired by those who like earthly love only and he would not be so popular in the East if he were understood entirely in a spiritual sense.

It is interesting to note his passionate appeals stricken by longings addressed to a male who is definitely no other than Almighty God Himself. How deftly he mixes the expressions bearing the stamps of ~~mundane~~ profane love with those that have airs of divine affection.

نزد من بفرط الحب ذبك تحسرا وارحم حشني بطلی هواك لرحم  
واذا سألک ان اسراک حقیقه ناسبح ولا تحصل جوابی: لن تری  
یا قلب! انت دعدتی فی جسم صبرا زحاذر ان تضیق و تفخر  
ان الفرام هو الحیاة فمت به صبرا فقل ان تموت و تحذرا  
قل للذین تقدوا قبلی دین بدی دین اضحی لا شبح جانی یری  
عنی خذوا دلی اقتدوا دلی اموا و تحذرو بصبا بنی بین الوری  
و تقد خلوت مع الجیب بیننا سر ارق من النیسم اذا سری



و ابا ح طر في نظرة املتها فزدت سرور فاد كنت سكر  
 فذشت بين جماله و جلاله و غدا لسان الحال عن مخبر  
 فادر لاحتك في محاسن وجهه "لحق جميع الحسن فيه مصورا

لو ان كل الحسن يكمل صورة  
 و آه كان مهلا و مكبرا

1

Increase my bewilderment<sup>2</sup> due to You

with your intense love,

And pity my heart burning with the fire  
 of your desire.

And when I ask for seeing you in actual fact,  
 Be generous, and do not make "you shall not see"<sup>3</sup>  
 the reply

O'heart, you promised to be patient in  
 your love for them,

1. Diwan (Beirut) Pages 169-170.

2. Bewilderment in respect of God is, according to Nabulsi, identical with guidance and that is why the poet wants it to be increased.

3. Both Burini and Nabulsi agree that this is an allusion to the dialogue which passed between God and Moses on Mount Sinai.

So avoid impatience and weariness.

Love is the life, die<sup>1</sup> for it like a lover,

You have every right to die, you will

be excused for it.

Say to those who preceded<sup>2</sup> me in love and to those,

Who came after, and to those who witness my griefs,

"Learn from me and follow me and listen to me,

And talk of my love among the people".

I was in a state of intimacy with my

beloved in solitude,

While a secret<sup>3</sup> more delicate than the

evening breeze passed between us

And he made one glance (for which I was cherishing)

lawful<sup>4</sup> for my eye,

So I came to be known, while I was unknown before.

I was stunned before his beauty and awe,

My state and not my tongue was my reporter.

- 
1. Explaining the verse Nabulsi writes that love is the only means of contact between the Eternal and the contingent as Quran says, "They love Him and He loves them", and the death of his heart in their love is the real life as it is arising due to God's command and not due to natural law.
  2. According to Burini "those who preceded" may mean that those who preceded the mystic and did not die and it is also admissible that the souls which survive the dead bodies are addressed.
  3. Nabulsi explains the secret to be something hidden from the intellects and it consists in ascertaining the reality of the Being of God (al-Haqq) through personal experience, revelation and divine vision. "Breeze" means spirit according to him.
  4. Burini points out that this glance was actually unlawful & it was a special favour for the poet only.

Cast but a glance over the beauties of his face,  
You will witness all beauty portrayed over it.  
If all beauty could assume a single form,  
It will proclaim La Ilah<sup>1</sup> and Allah o Akbar.

We noted above three major divisions of his poetry and have so far examined two of them, namely, passionate love for the beloved and yearning for Hijaz. A few words may be said about the third one i.e., Khamriyat (wine songs). Wine was used as technical term by sufis to denote divine love or <sup>os</sup>gnosticism long before Abnau<sup>^</sup>l Farid employed it to enrich his symbolism<sup>2</sup>. It was a common practice among them to interpret wine songs written by profane poets in a spiritual sense. Abnau<sup>^</sup>l Farid took full advantage of this tradition and with magnificent results.

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1. Nabulasi points out that La Illaha Illah Allah will be pronounced out of wonders at the beauty of the face and Allah Akbar will be due to the respect & paid to the Real Beauty.

2. In his short introductory note to the Wine ode Burini writes, "Know that this ode is based upon the technical terms used by the sufis because, they mention wine with all its names and qualities in their writings and mean by it the gnostic knowledge which God has granted them or His love or longings for Him".

The mystical back-ground of his wine poetry gives it a distinctive place he follows the conventional language and imagery of the *ṣ bacchic* poets, especially, that of Abu Nuwās. This is particularly true of his most famous ode, the so-called *Khamiriya*, which we propose to study now. Here he develops a symbolism which else - where he only uses incidentally. This lovely poem, glowing with all the charms of *bacchanalian* imagery presents wine which is unmistakably spiritual.

We quaffed the wine in memory of the Beloved  
that made us drunk before the vine was created<sup>1</sup>.  
Its cup the full-moon; itself a sun which, a  
crescent moon passes round, how many stars  
appear when the wine is mixed.<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. Burini writes "It means that we (souls) were intoxicated with joy on hearing from God, "Am I not your Lord?" during our pre-existence in the eternal knowledge of God before the body was created."
  2. Full moon, according to Burini, is perfect gnostic (*al-ʿarif al kamil*) while *Nabulasi* interprets it "be Perfect-Man, and crescent is meant to be a novice of the path by the former while the latter interprets it to be gnostic veiled by his personality, so that he manifests only a part of the Divine Light. He passes round the 'wine' means that he displays and makes known to others the Divine Names and Attributes. (*Nabulasi*). "when wine is mixed with water etc. means when pure contemplation is blended with the element of religion, the seeker of God is guided by divine light and like a traveller directed by the stars during night-journey". (*Burini*)



But for its fragrance I should not have found  
the way to its tavern; and but for its radiance,  
the imagination would not have pictured it<sup>1</sup>.

And time has not left aught of it but a breath,  
as if its being vanished where a concealment in  
the breasts of intellects.

Though it be but mentioned among the tribe,  
the tribesmen become intoxicated,  
yet guilty of no disgrace or crime<sup>2</sup>

From the very bowels of jars it mounted<sup>3</sup> up,  
and nothing remains of <sup>it</sup> in truth save a name.

.....

- 
1. Interpreting the verse Nabulsi writes,  
"Fragrance means sphere of the Primal Intelligence  
(Ruh al Azam) which is or contained in Divine  
command (Min Amrillah). And tavern symbolize  
presences of the Exalted Essence (Hadarat al Dhat  
al 'Alliah) which are Divine Names and Attributes.  
He say that were it not for the smell of these  
presences. I would not have been directed towards  
Beautiful Names and Exalted Attributes..... and  
and radiance signifies the Light of human  
intellect which is a flash of Primal Intelligence.  
The imagination would not have pictured it means  
had it not been for its luminous intelligence  
(Al-'Aql al Nurani) which is the light of human  
intellect the imagination would not have formed  
a mental picture of this wine which symbolises  
the Comprehensive Reality of the Being of God  
(Al Haqiqat al-Jami'ah al Wujudiah al-ilahiya)  
as itself it has no form.
  2. Tribesmen mean the mystics capable of receiving  
illumination and intoxication is due to what  
is revealed to them — Nabulsi.
  3. This refers to gradual fading away of ecstasy  
from the heart of mystic which is compared to  
the bowels of the jar.

They say to me, 'Describe it, for you are well-informed of its description' Ay, well do I know its proper ties.

Purity, unlike that of water,  
subtlety above that of air, light but not of fire,  
spirit without body.

The discourse concerning it preceded the whole  
of universe in eternity, where is no form nor any  
trace.

And there, though it all things came into being  
for a wise purpose, whereby it was hidden from  
every one that lacked understanding.

And my spirit was distraught with love for it,  
in such manner that twain were mingled and  
made one, not as a body is permeated by another.

It is wine without a vine, while Adam is  
my father and it is vine without wine,  
when its mother is a mother to me<sup>1</sup>.

Subtlety of vessels depends really on the  
subtlety of inward truths which the former  
cause to grow<sup>2</sup>.

And the division truly has taken place,  
while yet the whole is one : our spirits being  
the wine, our bodies are the vine.

---

1. Wine signifies pure being, vine  
phenomenal being.

2. The vessels are phenomenal forms manifesting  
the real being.

Before it is no 'before', and no 'after' after it;  
and the priority of all posterities, is essential  
for it.

They said, "You have quaffed the drink of sin".

May, but this  $\frac{1}{2}$  drank was truly, as  $\frac{1}{2}$  view,  
that the which it were sin to renounce<sup>1</sup>.

Good health to the folk of monastery!

How oft they were drunk with it;

and they had never quaffed it, but only aspired thereto<sup>2</sup>

But I was intoxicated with it before my  
physical existence shall remain such for ever  
though my bones may crumble.

Take it pure! but if you wish to mingle it,  
to turn away from the Beloved's mouths' lustre,  
that would be a wrong indeed.

And be your intoxication therewith but the  
life of an hour, you will think time as a slave  
obedient to your command.

No joy is there in this world for him who  
lives sober; and he that dies not of drunkenness  
misses prudence.

Let him weep for himself whose life is wasted  
without portion or lot in wine!

---

1. Cf. Euripides, Bacchae :

Oh, blessed he in all wise,  
Who hath drunk the Living Fountain,  
Whose life no folly staineth,  
And his soul is near to God;  
Whose sins are lifted, pall-wise,  
As he worships on the Mountain.

tr. Murray.

2. Burini writes that the folk of monastery are  
the gnostics and the lovers of Gods. According  
to Nabulsi they signify the Muslim saints who  
are the spiritual stations of Christ.

After studying Khamriyya one is naturally led to Ibnul Farid's great ode entitled *Rasm us Suluk* (The poem of the Mystics' Progress), or *al Ta'iiyyatu'al Kubra* which begins with the same symbolism of wine. The *Ta'iiyya* (which means a poem ending in alphabetical letter ta) with its 761 verses, is nearly as long as all the other poems together, if we leave the quatrains and enigmas out of reckoning. It is addressed to a disciple and describes the various phases of mystical experience through which the poet passed before attaining to oneness with God, and depicts the nature of this abiding oneness. His approach to this central problem of sufism is obviously pantheistic. Any impartial student of the ode cannot afford to disagree with its commentators who believe that the *Ta'iiyya* reflects the doctrines of Ibnul 'Arabi who according to Nabulasis's report noted above<sup>1</sup>, was a teacher of the poet. The report may be true or false but the influence of the Doctor Maximus is visible even to a casual reader of both. Their doctrines are of the same brand of pantheism which is surely Islamic as distinct from philosophic or materialistic, or Neo platonistic or Vedantic. And if one does not feel inclined to believe in the influence of the one on the other, one must conclude that Ibnul Farid came to have views similar to those of Ibnul Arabi

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1. See Page 48.



independently as Professor D.B. Macdonald has aptly remarked, "All thinking religious Moslems are mystics; all, too, are pantheists, but some do not it"<sup>1</sup>. But Ibnul Arabi's influence is so marked over the mystics since his time that his having influenced the poet is more likely than not. A brief survey of the ode, less poetical than some of his shorter poems but richer in mystical thought, will support our views<sup>2</sup>.

My eye was the palm on which the strong wine of  
love was stretched out to me,

And the cup containing it was the face of Her  
that transcends beauty<sup>3</sup>.

And when I was drunk, by an intoxicated glance  
I caused my companions to fancy that it was  
the quaffing of their drink that had gladdened  
my inmost spirit<sup>4</sup>.

---

1. Nicholson : Mystics of Islam Page 23.

2. See for this ode Divan, op.cit. PP.46 - 116.

3. i.e., my love was based on the contemplation of Divine, which transcends phenomenal beauty".

4. i.e., I did so in order to disguise my love. Companions mean the worshippers of material beauty.

My eyes made me independent of my cup as my  
in<sup>no</sup>ebriation was due to her qualities and not to  
the liquor<sup>1</sup>.

So it was in the tavern of my intoxication that  
the time of my thanksgiving to youths through whom  
my love was completely hidden inspite of my fame  
as a lover drew near.

When my sobriety came to its end, I asked for  
union with her, and the restraint of fear did not  
stand in my way due to latitude given by her.

The Bacchanalian imagery of these opening lines of  
the ode describe the initial stage of his journey which  
is termed as imperfect intoxication. This state is very  
painful for the poet as the ecstasy of the intoxication  
is followed by the sobriety of a lapse into self-hood  
and hinders his progress towards unification. So in the  
verses that follow he presses for Divine vision and  
complains about his sufferings in as many as eighty verses  
like an afflicted lover. While describing the quality of

---

1. "i.e. By means of my eye which is the  
recipient of Divine Beauty I was able to  
dispense with the cup of former which is a  
vehicle of phenomenal beauty as my love  
(intoxication) was due to the Beloved and  
not to the drink which is nothing but  
seeing beauty in material forms. He uses  
Qadah for cup instead of Ka'a as the former  
is used both for the empty as well as full  
and here he indicates the possibility of being empty"  
Kashani.

his love he associates himself with Malāmatis, among whom Ibnul Arabi includes all great sufis, pious caliphs and even prophet himself<sup>1</sup>.

Verily thou art the desire of my heart,  
and my utmost demand and the farthest aim and  
my choice and chosen one.

I put my modesty and deprecation off,  
clothing myself with indulgence,  
rejoicing in my throwing off my robe to others<sup>2</sup>.

And it is my duty to cast off modesty for thy sake,  
even though my people refuse to come near me;  
and dissipation is my law.

And no folk of mine are they, so long as they  
find fault with my recklessness and show hatred  
and deem it good to be harsh with me for thy sake.

My follows in the religion of love are those who love,  
and they have approved my ignominy and have liked  
my disgrace<sup>3</sup>.

The Beloved answers him by accusing of self conceit  
and insincerity in so many verses, ~~the first~~ :-

- 
1. See Futuhat.
  2. Kashani omits this verse which is certainly spurious.
  3. The commentators are of the opinion that the poet alludes here to the school of Sufis' who are known as the Malamatīs.

She said, Thou hast sought the love of somebody  
<sup>other</sup>  
~~after~~ than me, for saking in the blindness  
the right path leading to me.

After a description of his dying to his self and  
other related matters the poet records his impression  
of the nature of mystical union of the lover with the  
Beloved.

In reality I led my Imām, and all mankind were  
behind me, and she was wheresoever I turned my face.

My eye saw her in front of me in my prayer, and  
my heart was a witness to the fact of my being  
the Imam of all my Imams. No wonder if Imam faced me,  
as she dwelt in my heart and it is she who is the  
qibla of my qibla.

Both of us make a single person offering prayer  
who by virtue of his united state bows down to  
his own essence in all his prostrations.

Nobody prayed to me except myself,  
nor did I pray to any one but myself in every  
genuflection.

Certainly I was she whom I loved and myself had  
referred me to myself. So that in the sobriety  
following self-effacement I was none other than her,  
and when she unveiled herself my essence was endued



with my essence<sup>1</sup>.

When it is not called two my attributes are her attributes, and as we are one, her form is my form.

If she be called, it is I who answer, and if I am called she answers one who calls me and says Labbayk i (At your service). And declare the absoluteness of beauty, and do not call it finite due to your inclinations towards the outward lustre of the worldly things.

For the charm of every lovely youth and every fair girl is borrowed from Her beauty.

Qays, Lubna's lover, was crazed by Her; rather every lover, like Lajla's Majnun or 'Azza's Kuthayyar (was in reality in love with Her). She appeared to Her lovers in every disguise in forms of wondrous beauty. Sometimes as Lubna while at other times as Buthayna or 'Azza (who was dear to her lover).

They (lovely women) were not other than Her; no, and they could never be. She has no partner in Her beauty.

(And in return), I appeared to Her in the form of every lover enthralled by youth or a beautiful woman.

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1. Intoxication is only the beginning of Oneness. Perfect oneness is allowed in sobriety after effacement, when the self knows itself as the Divine which reveals itself to itself.

Now as Qays, anon as Kuthayar<sup>y</sup>, and sometimes I  
appear as Buthaynas' Jamil.

I was ever she and She was ever I,  
without any difference, rather my essence loved  
my essence.

This immense experience of Ittihad leads him to  
monistic pantheism of Ibnul 'Arabi and he seems to believe  
that nothing exists except one Universal Being, everything  
else being its manifestation. All the phenomena <sup>are</sup> is only  
an outwards show through which the show man is exhibited  
once the curtain of illusion is removed it will be  
revealed that all phenomena is nothing but the acting of the  
single actor.

All thou beholdest is the act of one,  
in solitude but closely veiled is He.  
Let Him but lift the screen, no doubt remains  
the forms are vanished, He alone is all.

Once the illusion of selfhood is destroyed, nothing  
remains but "The Master of the Show," the one real person  
in the drama:

Which, for the Pastime of Eternity,  
He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold.

Ibnul Farid is perfectly justified if he speaks  
in the person of God:-

And were I not veiled by my attributes,

the objects of my manifestation would be burnt by  
the light of my essence<sup>1</sup>.

The tongues of all beings, if you listen attentively,  
bear eloquent witness to my ~~Unity~~ Unity.

It follows from the doctrine of Ittihad that all  
objects are equally venerable as they are different aspects  
of Divinity. The sea, the earth, the man, animals, birds,  
the mosque, the church, the temple of idols, synagogues,  
the sacred fire of the magians - all symbolise Deity.  
All forms of worship are essentially divine. Even  
dualism and polytheism represent certain aspects in  
which God expresses Himself :

Through me the assembly of those who praise my  
name is attentive like the ear of one reading  
something, and the wine-sellers' shop is open  
like the eye of a scout due to me. And virtually  
no hand but mine tied the infidels' girdle;  
and if it is be loosed while acknowledging me,  
it was my hand that untied it.

And if the niche of mosque is illuminated by  
Koran, yet is no church destroyed by the Gospel

---

1. Versification of the celebrated Tradition  
about seventy thousand veils which conceal  
the face of Allah.

For the books of the Torah revealed to Moses  
for his people, whereby the Rabbis converse with  
God every night are wasted.

And if a worshipper fall down before the stones  
in Temple for idols, it is unreasonable to  
disapprove of it out of religious bias.

Not in any religion men's eyes been awry,  
not in any sect have their thoughts been perverse.  
They that heedlessly inclined towards sun lost  
not the way, as its brightness is derived from  
the light<sup>1</sup> my unveiled splendour.

And if the Magians worshipped the Fire -  
which, as history tells, was not extinguished for  
a thousand years - they intended none but me although  
they did not declare their intention.

Their affairs take a course according to the brand  
of the Names; and the wisdom which endowed the  
Essence with (diverse) attributes caused them to  
take that course in consequence of the Divine  
decrees<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Good and evil, salvation and perdition<sup>Turn</sup> are  
effects determined by the Divine Names e.g.,  
al-Muddi & (He that guides aright), al Mudill (He  
that leads astray), and by the Divine Attributes.



Had I proclaimed unity I should have committed the sin of apostasy and been stripped of the signs of my union through associating my doings (as an equal partner with God) with myself<sup>1</sup>.

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2. i.e. If I believed that God has one particular shape or form I would be an apostate, because in that case I shall deny all other forms through which He is manifested and thus deny God Himself. By believing in God distinct and separate from everything else I prove that the universe has an independent existence and make the creation a co-partner with God in the matter of existence which is "shirk".

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